CLARENCE:

A TALE OF OUR OWN TIMES.

Return, return! and in thy heart engraven keep my love;
The lesser wealth, the lighter load, — small blame betides the poor.

Bishop Heber.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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CLARENCE;

OR,

A TALE OF OUR OWN TIMES.

CHAPTER I.

" These are not the romantic times,
So beautiful in Spencer's rhymes,
So dazzling to the dreaming boy;
Ours are the days of fact, not fable,
Of Knights, but not of the Round table."

HALLECK.

MISS CLARENCE had now been long enough in town to get fairly started in the career of fashionable life. She had been visited by the *haut ton* of the city; and was already besieged by half a score of aspirants for her matrimonial favor. There were among them genteel young men, who

made their approaches and their retreats, in the delicate mode prescribed by the received usages of society. Such persons fill a respectable niche in life, but are not destined to 'adorn a tale;' we shall therefore, omit them in our *dramatis personæ.*

By far the most important personage among our heroine's lovers, was the *ci-devant* friend of the Roscoes, Stephen Morley, Esq. No longer the cringing, sycophantic, all-calculating Mr. Morley, for these qualities had achieved their end, and obtained their reward—he had risen to be a dispenser, instead of a seeker of political favors; he stood high in office, and higher in hope—so elevated that many believed that the most exalted post in our country was within his possible grasp—it certainly was in the eye of his ambition.

Mr. Morley, it was true, was some twenty or thirty years older than Miss Clarence, but he reasoned (and it must be confessed *sub modo)* 'that Miss Clarence, though young, was not beautiful'—he had half a dozen well-grown children; but 'she was neither gay nor girlish, and after all, what

were these trifles weighed against the name of Morley, with the cabalistic prefix of Judge, Governor, Secretary, or President?—'Thane of Glamis—Cawdor—King!'

Next in importance was Major Daisy. Let not the reader mistake—the major was no *champ de Mars* hero, but a gentle carpet knight. It might almost be said that he was born to his title, for he received it as commander-in-chief of a nursery regiment, and had probably retained it on the principle of attraction in opposites. It was true of the major, as of many nobler victims, that 'Fortune smiled deceitful on his birth;' he was lapped in luxury, but when it was time for him to have walked alone, viz: when he had advanced some thirty years on the journey of life, the rich house of his father, Daisy and Co., did what most others, rich and poor, do in our city—failed; and the major, not being of a temper to turn the tide of fortune, played the philosopher, and took the easy part of submitting to evils he had not the energy to resist. The world used him kindly. It fared with him, as with few who do not hold the golden

key — the *passe-partout* in a society of monied aristocracy — he retained his place in the *beau-monde*. For this he was indebted to old and confirmed associations. But what made Major Daisy an Areopagite in the female fashionable world, must be incomprehensible to those who do not know how important it is in that dominion of debateable land, of uncertain boundaries, and of ever-falling barriers, that some infallible hand should hold a scale by which to graduate the pretensions to gentility. Instead of the tiresome investigation at the ascension of a new family in the firmament of fashion, of 'who are they?' 'whom do they visit?' or 'who visits them' — the simple appeal to the Major, 'are they *genteel?*' laid all doubt and discussion at rest.

Then the Major had acquired a great reputation, (as some other tribunals do, simply by giving judgment), in the questions of fashion and *belleism*. If the mothers relied on him in matters of more vital importance, the daughters listened, as devotees to an oracle, to his opinion, of 'who was

the best dressed lady at the fancy-ball:' and the Major's decision that such a fair-one was '*the* decided *belle*,' was the fiat of fate. He knew at a *coup-d'œil* whether a hat were *really* Parisian, or of home manufacture—could tell a *real* blond, or camel's hair, at a bird's-eye view—was a connoisseur in pretty feet, and an exquisite judge of perfumes. To conclude all, the Major, like most *poor gentlemen*, dressed with elaborate neatness and taste—and, (to the utter perplexity of that large class of persons, who tax their wits to solve the problem of their neighbor's expenditures), with very genteel expense.

Major Daisy had rather an undue portion of the better part of valor in his composition. He had been all his life afraid of committing himself in a connubial pursuit. There was nothing but death which he dreaded so much as a refusal; but of late, there had come a small voice from his inmost soul, saying, if ever he meant to marry, it was time to think of it. By a singular coincidence, it happened that this oracle gave out its intimations about the time

Miss Clarence became an inmate in the family of Mrs. Layton, with whom the Major was on the footing of an old and intimate friend, and contemporary.

The rival whom the Major most feared, and with least reason, was ayoung scion of the old and universal family of *Smiths*, Mr. John Smith, Junr. the only son of a rich broker —a vulgar, half-bred youth, recently moulded into a dandy; and as that implies the negation of every thing manly and worth describing, we shall pass him over, only saying, that he presumed to our heroine's hand, incited thereto by certain refined suggestions from his father, such as, 'John, my boy, there's a chance for you!—a nice girl they say—her father is heavy, I know all about that—like to like, birds of a feather—fortune to fortune—that's the way to roll up the ball, my boy—set about it, John.' And the exemplary son, with infinite self-complacency, obeyed the paternal mandate.

Mr. D. Flint, who has already been repeatedly presented to our readers, must make of the lovers a *partie quarrée*. Flint was of the emigrating race of New England, and

from the heart of it; and a fair specimen of a class not rare in that enterprising land. He was a lawyer, but even the arts of that profession, which is supposed to sharpen all the wits, could not improve his natural faculty of 'getting along,' and pushing along. He came to the city without acquaintance, friends, or patronage of any sort; but, by dint of indefatigable industry, vigilant activity, and irrepressible forwardness, he penetrated to the foremost ranks of business, and obtained an uncontested circulation in the fashionable circles. This latter was accomplished much in the same way as the cat's celebrated ascent of the well, 'three steps up, and two steps down;' but though the rebuffs he received were innumerable, he was never disheartened by them. If utterly destitute of that *tact* which is the best guide in the art of pleasing, he was entirely free from the sensitiveness that is curiously compounded of sensibility, pride, self-love, and selfishness. He never took offence—the delicate intimations of the refined, the coarse joke, the rough reproach, disdain, contempt, neglect, all glanced from

his armor proof of triple steel—good nature, self-complacency, and insensibility. He was perfectly free from affectation, save in the single point of concealing his Christian name; of this he had unwarily made a mystery, when he first came to town; and his reluctance to disclose it had been confirmed by some of his mischievous acquaintance, who had appended to the initial *D.* every ridiculous prefix in the language. He was not only free in all other respects from affectation, but he had not aimed at polish, nor even quite freed himself from a rusticity of dialect, that betrayed his early associations. If told any thing that excited his wonder—this was rare, for true to the character of his all-knowing countrymen, he had

> ————"a natural talent for foreseeing
> And knowing all things;"————

but if perchance taken by surprise, he would exclaim 'do tell!' or 'you don't!' instead of those expletives of custom, '*Mon Dieu!*'—'God bless me!'—and notwithstanding the proverbial vulgarity of these provincialisms, he *guessed*, *concluded*, or *calculated*, in every sentence.

We hope to be forgiven for calling this portrait a national sketch. 'Whom may we take liberties with if not with our relations?' and we must not be suspected of disloyalty to our race, though the man is not always painted triumphing over the lion—the New Englandman superior to every other. Besides, we sincerely like Mr. D. Flint, and the class of character to which he belongs. If deficient in the niceties of feeling, he abounded in active useful kindness. If unpolished, he was honest; and, if unrefined, he afforded a sort of safety-valve for the over refinement and irascibility of others.

These were the satellites that revolved around the envied heiress! and these were assembled about her one evening when Mr. Flint, always the first to move, proposed they should go to the Athenæum lecture. Miss Clarence assented, glad of any opportunity of escaping from the siege of her suitors. Mr. Morley was quite too much a man of affairs to waste an hour at a lecture of any kind, and he withdrew. Mr. Smith "would go if Miss Clarence wished, for," he gently murmured, "I am like him *which* divided

the world into *one* part—that where she is."

"Oh, my poor friend, Rousseau!" exclaimed Mrs. Layton, at this version of one the most felicitous passages of her favorite author; "it is too hard that you should fall on evil tongues, as well as evil times. But come, Pedrillo, the world is *divided* into *one* hemisphere to you too, I believe: what say you to killing an hour, or rather permitting it to die a natural death at the Athenæum?"

Pedrillo replied, to Mrs. Layton's ear alone, 'that the Athenæum was a bore, and he preferred remaining at home, provided Miss Emilie did the honors of the house in her mother's absence.' Emilie was appealed to; but on every occasion—with and without reason—she shrank from Pedrillo; and she expressed an earnest wish to accompany her friend to the Athenæum; whereupon Pedrillo bowed, and declared he should be most happy to attend her. Mr. Flint murmured at these preliminaries. He was for making the most of every thing. 'The lecture was on astronomy—there were to be fine transparencies exhibited, and the ladies would lose their chance of good seats by this delay.'

"Pshaw, Mr. Flint," said Mrs. Layton, "are you under the delusion of imagining we go to the Athenæum to see, or to hear?"

"What do you go for, then?" honestly asked Flint.

"To be seen, my good friend—to fulfil our destiny, and be observed of all observers. Blues, pedants, and school-boys may go to stare, and listen; but we of the privileged class have, thank Heaven, a dispensation."

"Privileged class! what a happy expression!" exclaimed Mr. George Smith, eyeing himself obliquely in the mantel-glass.

"Pardon me, madam, I do not agree with you," said Major Daisy. "The Athenæum lectures afford a remarkably genteel way of getting information, and are as little tiresome as astronomy, and philosophy, and all that sort of thing, can be made. You know * * * is of my opinion—he remarked in last evening's paper that 'the tone of society had improved since their institution.'"

"They are certainly useful," said Mr. Flint.

"*Oh l'utile—l'utile—Je te déteste,*" exclaimed Mrs. Layton. "How do you like

my hat, Daisy?" The ladies were adjusting their cloaks and hats.

"*Admirable, Madame!*—from the *Rue Italienne*—is it not?"

"You have the best eye in the city—yes—Miss Thompson imported it for me. You see it is a *demi-saison*—the flowers half hidden by the feathers—the reign of summer yielding to winter. And then observe how happily it is adapted to the *demi-saison* of life—alas the while!"

"I declare it is a very pretty-looking hat," said Mr. Flint. "What was the price of it, Mrs. Layton?"

"Pardon me, Mr. Flint, that is the only particular I never inquire about." Mrs. Layton was right; such vulgar queries are for those who mean to pay, or at least *not* to postpone payment indefinitely.

The party was now equipped, and proceeded to their destination. "I told you so—we are too late," said Mr. Flint, on opening the door, and finding the room full to overflowing.

"A room is never too full," replied the gallant major, "for certain persons to find a place."

" A very good rule, Major, and another is, Miss Clarence, to be quite unconscious that the seat you happen to prefer is occupied—now follow me." Suiting the action to the word, Mrs. Layton pushed her way to the upper end of the room, declining gracefully, as she proceeded, numerous offers of seats, till she obtained the conspicuous position at which she aimed. Gertrude was amazed at what would have startled a novice only, the ease with which a lady of fashionable notoriety can doff the prescriptive delicacy of her sex, and force her way to a commanding station, with a boldness that would better become a military chieftain. The lecturer paused at the bustle occasioned by the entrance of the brilliant party. Mrs. Layton always commanded notice. Her daughter, a newly-risen star in the fashionable hemisphere, had not yet sated curiosity, and our heroine was known—we grieve so often to repeat the unprized distinction—as 'Miss Clarence—the great fortune.'

In our commercial city every thing is inspired or infected by the bustling genius

of the place. Even scientific associations, and literary institutions, are modified by the habits of business. The merchant, who has a hundred argosies at sea, can give but brief attention to any thing but the chances and losses of trade; and thus it happens that at the Athenæum, the most fashionable of our literary resorts, *four* lectures only are allowed to the discussion of the most useful arts—to the most abstruse science—to the inexhaustible topics of metaphysics—to the fascinating themes of German and English literature. If poetry is the subject, the lecturer must discuss its origin, its nature, its uses and abuses—he must sail down the stream of time from Hesiod to the last stanza by Moore, or Halleck, or Bryant: he must prove that if our soil has as yet produced few flowers of poesy, we have a greater capacity to develope than any other people, (for our patriotic audiences are not quite satisfied without this sacrifice to the local divinities,)—and he must do all this in four lectures of one hour each, 'counted by the stop-watch, my lord.' In this brief

space the geologist scales the Andes, dives to the primitive rocks, and imparts his revelations of antediluvian worlds. The astronomer comprises the brilliant discoveries of his science within this Procrustes measure. Doubtless there are fortunate and dextrous individuals who in this match of knowledge against time may, like persons running through the Hesperian gardens, catch some of the golden fruit as it falls. But miracles are past, and for the most part we must say, 'Alas, for this multitude, for they go empty away!'

A limited time is not the only difficulty with which the lecturer has to contend. He must possess a rare art who commands the attention of a popular assembly constituted of young ladies just escaped from the thraldom of school — their beaux just launched on the tide of fashion—married pairs, seeking a refuge from conjugal *ennui* —a few complaisant *literati*, who go '*pour encourager les autres*,' and a very few honest devotees in every temple of knowledge. But even in such an auditory 'the air, a chartered libertine is still,' while * * * * defines

and magnifies the art his genius illustrates; and while * * * * kindles up the dim speculations of metaphysics with the light of his genius, and imparts to their abstractions the vivifying essence of his wit.

The particular attraction of the evening we have selected was some fine transparencies. Gertrude had taken an unambitious seat behind Mrs Layton. "I am afraid," she said, "my *rue Italienne* is in your way, my darling,—my feathers *de trop*, are they not?—You cannot see any body?"

"I cannot see the lecturer, and, as I must honestly confess that I am smitten with the rustic desire to see the transparencies, I will trouble Mr. Pedrillo to conduct me to an unoccupied place just below us."

"Rather an eccentric movement for a fashionable young lady, but '*chacun à son gout!* go, we will not lose sight of you."

Pedrillo saw her ensconced in a position that promised to be a favourable point of sight; but here too a phalanx of plumes waved and nodded before her, and the fair wearers were reconnoitring the company through their eye-glasses, and interchanging

their remarks on new dresses and new faces. Pedrillo left her, saying, he could not presume to divide her attention with the lecturer, and resumed his station at Emilie's side. The lights were, soon after, all extinguished, to give full effect to the transparencies; and directly two gentlemen took an unoccupied place before Gertrude. The one she recognised by his voice to be Flint, who had left his party to speak, as he said, 'to a member of Congress—a particular friend;' and the other was Gerald Roscoe. The gentlemen were as sincere as she had been in their wish to give their attention to the lecturer; but it was impossible; the fairer part of the audience had taken advantage of the entertainment being chiefly addressed to the eye, and were indulging in whispered *têtes-à-tête*. The gentlemen followed their example, holding their hats before their faces to secure their communications from general circulation, and thus giving them more distinctly to their back auditor. "Have you met Miss Clarence yet?" asked Flint.

"No—never."

"I will introduce you to her after the lecture; I am quite intimate with her."

"Thank you—I have already been offered that honour once to-day by the mother of our client, Stevy Brown; the poor dog is at home again, in high favour with the old tailor; and his wife, who is very much my friend, and overflowing with gratitude to Miss C. for some part she had in the reconciliation, predicts a match between us, and actually sent for me to-day, to propose we should help on our destiny by meeting at a sociable tea-drinking at her house!"

"Well—what did you do about it?"

"Heavens, Flint! I should think even your business-spirit would shrink from such an encounter."

"I don't know that—it is not best to be too romantic; but I am glad at any rate that you declined the meeting. You are such a favourite with the girls, Roscoe, that I had rather not have you for a rival."

"The danger of my rivalship, Flint, would depend on the eagerness of the competition, and that on the value of the prize to be striven for."

"Oh, certainly—and the prize in this case *is* worth striving for. I should despise marrying for fortune alone as much as any man; but I presume fortune don't disqualify—I can tell you, Roscoe, Miss Clarence is a very sensible young lady."

"Heaven defend us from your very sensible young ladies!"

"Oh, well, she is very fashionable, if you prefer that, and very much admired."

"So I am told by Morley, Daisy, & Co.—a goodly company, truly—all, all honorable men. The value of their admiration can be pretty accurately calculated—what is the amount of the stock, Flint—the consideration for which these gentlemen will give their matrimonial bonds?"

"Now you are too severe, Roscoe. There are several ladies in the city as much of an object as Miss Clarence; but then, I must own, there is an advantage in having an elegant sufficiency, secured from all contingencies."

"I am ignorant of the terms of the trade, Flint; what do you mean by an elegant sufficiency?"

"A hundred thousand dollars. I know, on the best authority, that the old man has secured her that; so that if he marries again, and some folks think he will, or if he lives for ever—dyspepsia never kills any body, you know—there is still enough for any reasonable man. I tell you again, Roscoe, Miss Clarence would not be a bad bargain without her money. Upon my honour I would as soon sell my soul as marry for money alone—but she comes up to my rule, viz. never to marry a woman with a fortune that I would not marry if I had the fortune, and she were without it—that's about fair, is it not?"

Roscoe was struck with this *naïf exposé* of sordid calculation, just notions, and honest feeling, and he was on the point of wasting a little sentiment on Flint, in a remonstrance against this admixture of the pure and base, but he remembered in time that there is nothing more quixotic than to attempt to change the current of a man's mind by a single impulse, and he contented himself with saying, "I am no casuist in these matters; I conceived an early prejudice, a sort of na-

tural antipathy against a *fortune*—that I believe is the technical term for a prize-lady."

"You don't say so!—that's very odd."

"It may be so, but as a natural antipathy is a feeling of which we do not know the origin, and which we never hope or try to overcome, you may venture to introduce me to Miss C. without any fear of competition."

Flint had a profound respect for Roscoe's opinion, and, after a short interval of silence, he said, "Do tell me why you so much object to marrying a fortune?"

Roscoe replied, in the words of an old ballad,

"Her oxen may die i' the house, Billie,
And her kye into the byre,
And I sall hae naething to mysel,
But a fat fadge by the fyre."

Gertrude smiled, she could not help it, at the ridiculous light in which Roscoe had placed her; but a captive at the stake would have had no reason to envy her, delicate as she was almost to fastidiousness, while she heard her market value so coarsely set forth

by Flint, and her father, who was embalmed in her heart in the sanctity of filial love, spoken of as the 'old man,' whose projects, health, and life were of value only as enhancing, or diminishing her chances of wealth—and this to Roscoe too. Gertrude felt, for the first time, the full force of a sentiment that she had almost unconsciously cherished. If a woman would make discoveries in that intricate region, her heart, let her analyse the solicitude she feels about the light in which she is presented even to the imagination of him whom she prefers. The estimation of the most indifferent or despised becomes of consequence, when it may colour with one shade the opinion of that individual. 'Is it not possible,' thought Gertrude, 'to escape this introduction?—I cannot—I will not become at once in his eyes this detested 'prize-lady'—what an odious term!' this object of the pursuit of 'Morley, Daisy, & Co.'—this 'fat-fadge' of his perspective;'—and dreading any thing less than the threatened presentation and consequent *éclaircissement*, she determined to make her way to Mrs. Layton, and on

some pretext retire from the lecture-room, before she again encountered Flint. She had half risen, when she was arrested by some disorder in that part of the room where she had left her party, and directly the cause was explained by several voices exclaiming, 'there's a lady fainting!'—'open a window' — 'make room there!' The lecturer stopped. A candle was lighted at his lamp, and Gertrude saw Emilie supported, almost carried, in Randolph Marion's arms, and followed by Pedrillo and her mother. Marion's face was pale and agitated. Flint sprang forward with his usual alacrity to offer assistance; Gertrude lost every other consideration in her interest for her friend, and would have followed, but she heard Mrs. Layton say, "It is merely the heat of the room—come with us, Mr. Flint—Major Daisy stays for Miss Clarence —run forward, Mr. Flint, and see if there is a carriage at the door—if not, get one." Never was there a more useful man for an exigency than Flint. Roscoe had stepped forward to assist the retiring party, but,

after exchanging a word with Mrs. Layton, he resumed his place. Miss Clarence was before him, and the candle still near enough to reveal her features. Their eyes encountered. She bowed, but with the coldest reserve, for at that moment she felt her identity with the 'prize-lady' only. Roscoe's surprise and pleasure at meeting her prevented his observing her coldness. "Is it possible," he exclaimed, with the utmost animation, "that I have been unconsciously near you; I shall never again believe in those delicate spiritual intimations that are supposed to be conveyed without the intervention of the senses." Gertrude secretly wished that the senses too had suspended their ministry, that her ear had been deaf to those sounds that seemed now to paralyze the organs of speech.

Roscoe looked curiously round in quest of some person, or persons, who should appear to be of Miss Clarence's party. She saw his curious survey, enjoyed his perplexity, and kept her attention apparently fixed on the lecturer. "It is a pity my

friend, Mr. ——, does not speak loud enough to be heard," said Roscoe, "since he is so fortunate as to engross your attention."

"It aids one materially in hearing, to listen," replied Gertrude.

"A good hit," said an elderly gentleman, who sat next Miss Clarence; "a word, young man," he continued, drawing Roscoe towards him,—"I advise you not to interrupt that young woman any longer; she comes here for some profitable purpose—she is a teacher in the High school, I surmise."

'She certainly listens most dutifully,' thought Roscoe, 'but this good gentleman's surmise is not mine.' "If the lady is a teacher, sir," he replied, with the utmost good humor, "I am a learner, and you must allow me to use my golden opportunity. 'The gods send opportunities—the wise man profits by them,' you know"—he quoted the Latin saying in its original.* His admonisher was so propitiated by the implied compliment to his learning, that, though he did not understand a word of it, Roscoe might have talked through the lecture without any further reproof from him.

The lecture was evidently drawing to a

close, and Gertrude heartily wished that, like Cinderella, she had some good fairy at hand to assist her departure; and Roscoe secretly exulted that now at least she could not disappear without affording him some clue by which to ascertain her name—all that seemed to him unknown—so satisfactory is that internal conviction that is wrought by the character and manners. Roscoe availed himself of a pause, while the lecturer was adjusting a transparency: "I shall hope again to meet you here; pardon this uncourteous *you*—our barbarous language has no more gentle substitute for the name. Do not," he added, in a lowered and earnest tone, "do not leave it to destiny any farther to weave the web of our acquaintance; allow me to seek you elsewhere, or, at least, to expect to meet you again here."

"Have you forgotten," asked Gertrude, referring to an expression in Roscoe's note, "have you forgotten your voluntary 'covenant with your lips?'"

"Pardon me—that covenant only extended to impertinent questions of others, and indirect inquiries."

"But those were not the terms of the

compact, and you have given me new reasons this evening for enforcing it."

"Impossible! what can I have said or done to deserve such a mark of your displeasure?"

"Not my displeasure—exactly," she said—and 'not my displeasure at all,' spoke the sweet smile that beamed from her lips; but now the candles were re-lighted, and she perceived Major Daisy eagerly making his way through the crowd to her. She abruptly left Roscoe, and met Daisy. She had dropped her veil to prevent all recognitions from her acquaintance. "Do not speak to me," she said, as the major was beginning to describe the anxiety with which he had looked for her, "there is a person here I wish particularly to avoid—let me pass out as if entirely unknown." Daisy, not doubting she wished to cut some vulgar acquaintance, implicitly obeyed her, admiring the facility with which she was acquiring the arts of polite life. She thus succeeded in completely eluding the vigilance of Roscoe. His eye followed her till she was lost in the crowd; but he saw no one join her, and he was not without some

uncomfortable reflections on the singularity of a lady violating the common forms of society. Yet there was so marked a propriety and delicacy in Gertrude's deportment, that it seemed ridiculous to doubt her. He racked his brain to conjecture what she could have meant by alleging that he had that very evening given 'her new reason for her mystery.' 'She might,' he thought, 'have overheard my discussion with Flint; but I said nothing dishonourable to her sex—or any individual of the blessed community, but poor Miss Clarence. Heaven forgive me for my antipathy to that girl's name even——Well, I will home to my mother, and see if female ingenuity can help me to unravel this mystery.'"

CHAPTER II.

"Laissez-moi faire—Il ne faut pas se laisser mener comme un oison; et, pourvu que l'honneur n'y soit pas offensé, on se peut libérer un peu de la tyrannie d'un père." MOLIERE.

ON the night after the lecture at the Athenæum, Miss Clarence had just laid her head on the pillow, when she heard her door gently opened, and saw Emilie enter. "Oh, Gertrude," she said, "how could you go to bed without coming to see me?"

"My dear Emilie! I was prevented by your mother. She told me you were exhausted by your indisposition at the lecture, and had fallen asleep, and Justine had requested no one would disturb you."

"How can mamma!" Emilie checked herself, and added, "I have not been asleep—I cannot sleep—but I will not disturb you, Gertrude. Only kiss me once, and tell me you love me, and feel for me." She knelt beside Gertrude, and laid her face on her friend's bosom. Nothing could be more exquisite than her figure at this moment, as the moonlight fell on it. Her flowing night-dress set off the symmetry of her nymph-like form; her hair, parted with a careless grace, lay on her brow in massy waving folds; her cheeks were flushed with recent agitation, and her eyes, the ministers of her soul, revealed its sadness. Her attitude seemed to solicit pity, and Gertrude, full of the quick-stirring sympathies of youth and ardent feeling, obeyed their impulse. "Come into my bed, Emilie," she said, "and lie in my arms, and pour out your heart to me as to a second self. Every one of your feelings shall be a sacred trust, and I will think and act for you as I would for myself."

Never did a child, with its little burden of untold grief, spring more eagerly to its mother's bosom, than Emilie to the arms of her

friend. She felt there as if she were at home, and at rest, and no evil could approach her! She wept without fear—and without measure. "I never was used," she said, "to shutting up my thoughts and feelings in my own bosom, and it has seemed to me as if my heart would burst. Mamma has charged me so often not to say any thing to you on a certain subject—but I never promised her—do you think it was wrong, to let you Gertrude, who are such a true friend to us all, to let you know what was in my mind?"

"You cannot help it, Emilie, for I already guess and fear all that is not told. Have I not understood your not writing to me?—your reserve since I have been with you? Have I not observed your drooping eye—your timid, shrinking look, whenever Pedrillo appears?"

"Oh, I hate him!" interrupted Emilie—it was the ungentlest word she ever spoke.

"Did I not see you to-night in Randolph Marion's arms?"

"Did you see that, Gertrude?—then you know—no, that you cannot know—"

"Randolph's agitated countenance, Emilie,

and your emotions have left you little to disclose—he still loves you?"

"I think—I believe—I *hope* he does. Is it not strange, Gertrude, that I can hope it, when his love must be useless to me, and misery to himself?

"No, Emilie, the hope of a requital is the first and last demand of affection—the first and last breath of its existence."

"Then it was not sin in me to feel such a gush of joy when our eyes met, and I perceived in that one brief glance that I was still beloved. Gertrude, I forgot where I was—I thought of nothing but that Randoph still loved me. Mr. Pedrillo must have observed us—he whispered in my ear 'beware!' I felt as if a serpent had stung me. Then the room whirled round, and I knew nothing more till I was standing upon the college steps, leaning on Randolph's bosom, and supported by his arms—he resigned me to mamma—pressed my hand to his lips—yes, before Pedrillo's eyes, and *mamma's*—and then he said 'Emilie, forgive me!' and darted away. He spoke but those three words, but did they not say he had wronged me by

that cruel letter at Trenton? did not they indicate that he still loves me?——but if he does"——

"Is it not possible, Emilie, to avoid this horrid marriage?"

"No—no—that man is as relentless as the grave—we are all in his power. *My price is paid*, Gertrude—my mother has told me so." The poor girl averted her face as if she would have hidden her shame at the insupportable thought of the infamous traffic in which she was sacrificed.

Gertrude started up. "Your *price*, Emilie!" she exclaimed, "Is it *money* that is in question?—can money redeem you from this dreadful fate?"

"It is not money alone," replied Emilie, in a tone that proved she had not caught a ray of hope from the animated voice of her friend; "there is some dreadful mystery, Gertrude, mamma does not understand it, but ruin—absolute, hopeless ruin, awaits us all if this marriage is not accomplished. Oh, I could have laid down my life—I could have sold myself to slavery: but to marry a man I

so detest—and fear—and Randolph still loving me!—but you cannot help me, my noble, generous Gertrude—there is no help for me."

"I do not despair, Emilie," replied Gertrude, to whose strong and resolute mind no obstacle seemed insuperable, when her friend's preservation was the object to be obtained; "I do not despair—there is a limit to parental rights—you do not owe, and you must not yield a passive and destructive obedience to the authority of your parents. You have a right to know what this ruin is which you are to avert by self-immolation. We will try to the utmost to close this mysterious gulf without burying you within it. Your marriage has been once deferred by the intervention of Heaven—try now what a heaven-inspired resolution can do."

"When I listen to you, Gertrude, it seems possible."

"It is possible. Is Pedrillo urgent as to the time?—Has your father named a day to you?"

"Not the day precisely; but I see there is

no escape—he told me this morning, it must not be much longer delayed."

"At any rate," said Gertrude, after a little consideration, "there will be time enough for me to receive a letter from my father. Rest assured, Emilie, that whatever can be done to save you I will do—now compose yourself, and go to sleep." Emilie did not comprehend what her friend meant to do, or could do; but she seemed to repose tranquilly on her promise, and, like a vine that has drooped till its delicate tendrils caught a support, she clung to Gertrude in secure dependence, and soon fell asleep as quiet as a child in the sanctuary of its mother's arms.

The next morning, as Gertrude was indulging the children, and herself no less than the children, in a game of romps in the nursery, she received a summons to Mrs. Layton's apartment. She found that lady reclining on her sofa, her window-curtains so arranged as to admit only a flattering twilight. A new novel, a new poem, bouquets of fresh flowers, and half a dozen

notes on perfumed and colored paper, lay on the table before her. She was reading an ode to childhood, and her eyes were suffused with the tears which the poet's imagination had called forth. Before Gertrude had closed the door, the children, disappointed at being so suddenly deprived of their favorite pleasure, came shouting after her. "Shut them out—shut them out," cried Mrs. Layton, "I cannot have my room turned into a *ménagerie:*—ah, thank heaven, now we are quiet again. Come and sit with me, dearest, not 'under the green-wood tree'—that is the luxury of Clarenceville—but on my sofa, where we can better defy 'winter and rough weather.' Here is a harvest for you, the rarest and most costly flowers delicately directed to 'Mrs. L., for herself, *her friend*, and Miss Emilie'—a proposition from the Major, that we should make up a party for the masquerade—and lastly, a diplomatic letter from Mr. Morley. Listen to it, Gertrude, for, though addressed to me, it has been studiously adapted to your ear."

"My dear Madam—I have just received "a letter from Mr. Clarence, who was a "particular friend of my father's." Ha! ha! Gertrude, love plays strange things with chronology—Morley is full five and forty, which I take to be half a lustre in advance of your father; but *allons!* "He recom-"mends a friend of his, Mr. Randolph "Marion, for the office of ——, and says, "what may be true though flattering, that "my influence will decide who shall be "the successful candidate. Nothing in life "would give me greater pleasure than to "oblige Mr. Clarence, but I am unfortu-"nately in a degree committed to a very "zealous and useful member of our party. "If, however, your fair friend, Miss C. is "interested in Marion, (I do not mean *en* "*amante*, for I understand there is no in-"terest of a delicate nature in question), "I shall make every effort and every sacrifice "to oblige her. Will you assure her of "this, after ascertaining her wishes in the "most *recherché* manner imaginable? Your "sex are born diplomatists. Oh that you,

"my dear Madam, would vouchsafe to be
"my minister plenipotentiary '*dans les*
"*affaires du cœur!*'

"I remain, Madam,
"Yours, with infinite respect
"and regard, &c., &c., &c.,
"STEPHEN MORLEY."

"*Les affaires du cœur!*" repeated Mrs. Layton, "Oh love, what hypocrisies are practised in thy name!—but what says my 'fair friend' to Mr. Morley?"

"That he can in no way do me so great a favor as by securing the appointment of Randolph Marion."

"But, my 'fair friend' must understand that the exchange of equivalents is a favorite principle, in the political economy of certain politicians; and that Mr. Morley expects that the gift of this office to Marion, shall be a måke-weight to turn the matrimonial scale in his favor?"

"I shall not be deterred by any fastidious reference to Mr. Morley's expectations, from getting an advantage in this

barter trade, of which I am the unhappy object—particularly as the advantage is one in which I have no personal interest. I will myself write a reply to Mr. Morley, and if—if Marion obtains the office, will it not be possible, Mrs. Layton ?"

Nothing could be less explicit than Gertrude's words; nothing more so, than her eager, penetrating look. Mrs. Layton understood her perfectly, and replied emphatically, and with chilling coldness, "not possible."

Gertrude, with abated, not extinguished hope, wrote the note, and despatched it to Morley. That finished, "The next affairs in order," said Mrs Layton, "are these bouquets from your lack-brain suitors, Daisy and Smith. I gave them some lessons, last evening, in the vocabulary of flowers. Daisy has sent the emblems of all the passions, sentiments, and emotions of humanity, so that if he finds it convenient not to mean one, he can mean another. My friend Daisy understands that part of wisdom, which is weariness, but poor Smith has staked all on

a single die. Here is his declaration, in a half bushel of rose-buds!"

"And am I expected to comprehend their symbolical language?"

"Oh, no; give yourself no farther trouble than to grace the flowers in the wearing, and answer the gentlemen when they speak their accustomed language, which, heaven knows, is far enough from that of these sweet interpreters of 'thoughts that breathe.' Here is a note from Flint; honest, practical, every-day Flint. He asks me to lend him Rousseau's Heloise! Mr. D. Flint, translated to the sublimated region of sentiment; what a triumph for you, Gertrude! But you have such a superb indifference to all these honors—what are you examining so critically? — the autograph of my friend, Gerald Roscoe; a note I have just received from him inquiring after Emilie's health; he seems in a sentimental mood; ah! *l'étrange chose que le sentiment!* But it is as natural to Roscoe as soaring to the lark; while poor Flint is like a stage-cupid, with pasteboard wings. Gertrude, you are wel-

come to your lovers, while I have Roscoe. Spare your blushes, dearest." Gertrude did blush, but it was at her private interpretation of Roscoe's sentimental mood. Mrs. Layton proceeded, "I mean, while I have Roscoe for my *friend*. He would never fall in love with a married woman; at least, never *tell* his love; he is too *American* for that, though, *grâce à Dieu*, not precise. But we have not yet decided on our answer to Daisy; will you go to the masquerade? in mask, of course, for I never remain a spectator, where I may be an actor. Now you look as if you were going to raise objections, and be afraid of what papa will say."

"No, I have no fear of the kind, I assure you, Mrs. Layton. My father has no wish to be an external conscience to me. He has given me certain principles, but he leaves me perfectly at liberty in their application."

Mrs. Layton shook her head: "I always shudder when a girl, minus twenty, begins to talk of principles. Spare me! spare me the virtue that is weighed in the balance,

and squarred by the rule. *Ma chère*, you would be infinitely more fascinating, if you would break through this thraldom."

"A thraldom, Mrs. Layton, of which I am unconscious, cannot be very oppressive. No condition admits greater liberty than mine, a liberty that has no other limit than the bounds set to protect our virtue."

"Heaven preserve us, Gertrude! I had no intention of calling all this forth by a simple proposition to join a masquerading party. You have raised a whirlwind to blow away a feather. In one word, will you go, *en masque*?

"In one word, then, Mrs. Layton, no."

"*Eh bien*—that is settled." Rather an awkward pause ensued, and was broken off, to the relief of both parties, by the entrance of a milliner's girl, whom her mistress, Madame, had sent to Mrs. Layton with some beautiful specimens of newly arrived Parisian finery. "Beautiful! beautiful!" exclaimed Mrs. Layton, as she opened the box; "ah, Gertrude, the advantages of fortune are countless — you can indulge yourself in these luxuries to any extent."

Miss Clarence did not seem disposed to avail herself of the privilege, while Mrs. Layton with the utmost eagerness selected some of the most costly articles for Emilie and laid them aside, and then tried on and decided to retain, a *Gabrielle pélerine*, a *Vallière cap*, and *Henri quatre* ruff. "Now, my good girl," she said, "take the rest back, and tell Madame I am infinitely obliged to her for giving me the first choice."

"Madame," said the girl, modestly, "Madame pinned the price to each article."

"Yes—but she must know the prices?"

"Yes, ma'am—but Madame told me not to leave the articles unless you paid for them."

"Madame is excessively nice," said Mrs. Layton, colouring, and throwing back the articles she had selected for herself; but, instantly resuming the Gabrielle, "I must have this," she said, "it is so graceful and *piquante*, and really I have nothing else fit to wear this evening." She emptied her purse of its contents, five-and-twenty dollars, precisely the amount of the Gabrielle. She gave the money to the girl, who was refolding and replacing the articles she had

first laid aside, " Stop, I keep those, she said, and turning to Gertrude, added, in a half whisper, " they are for Emilie—you know it is indispensable she should be prepared for a certain occasion—what *shall* I do about them?"

Gertrude felt embarrassed; she perceived Mrs. Layton expected she would offer to relieve her from her dilemma, in the obvious way, by advancing the money; but this she was resolved not to do, and she replied coldly, " I really cannot advise you."

Mrs. Layton looked displeased—and saying, in a suppressed voice, " there is one alternative, though not a very pleasant one," she wrote a note and gave it to the girl—" Take it to the City-Hotel," she said, " inquire for Mr. Pedrillo—give it into his hands—he will give you the money."

" Mrs. Layton!" exclaimed Gertrude, starting up, and losing all her assumed coldness, " do not, I beseech you, do that—allow me to pay for the articles."

" As you please," replied Mrs. Layton, in the most frigid manner. Gertrude flew to her apartment, returned with her purse,

paid the amount, and the girl withdrew. Gertrude would have withdrawn too, but Mrs. Layton, who had completely recovered her self-possession, said, "You must not leave me, dear Gertrude, till you have forgiven me for my momentary displeasure; I misunderstood you; but there is nothing that so shocks my feelings as the appearance of selfishness."

There was something almost ludicrous to Gertrude, in the sudden *bouleversement* of her ideas occasioned by this speech. She expected Mrs. Layton would devise some ingenious cover or extenuation for her own culpable selfishness and indulged vanity, but she was quite unprepared for this extravagant self-delusion. Her heart ached, too, at the sight of the ornaments that were destined to adorn the victim for the altar, and she stood between the tragic and the comic muse, not knowing whether to laugh or cry, when she was opportunely relieved by another visitor.

An old woman entered the apartment and approached Mrs. Layton, curtesying again and again, in that submissive deferential

manner that is so foreign, so *anti-American*. Her accent was Swiss, and her costume neat and national. She began with an apology; "She would not have troubled the lady just now, but the old man at home was starving with cold, and another besides, who had the chills of death on him—God help him—and Justine said"—

"You are Justine's mother, then," interrupted Mrs. Layton.

"Yes, indeed, lady—I've been here so often I thought the lady knew me; and Justine—God bless the child—Justine said the five-and-twenty dollars were waiting for me since the morning in the lady's hands."

Mrs. Layton had indeed at the first glance too perfectly recognised the old woman, and anticipated her claims. She had, after a hundred broken promises to Justine, her maid, to whom she owed a much larger sum, told her, not two hours before, that she had twenty-five dollars ready for her; and she now felt all the mortification—not of failing to perform her contract; to such trifles she was accustomed—but of an exposure before Gertrude, and while the Gabrielle lay as a

mute witness before her. Mrs. Layton rather prided herself on speaking the truth; it was a matter of taste with her, and she adhered to it unless driven to extremities. She was even frank, so far as frankness consisted in gracefully confessing faults that could not be concealed; but those that are grossly deficient in one virtue, will not be found martyrs to another, and rather than it should appear to Gertrude, that she had given for the Gabrielle the very money due and promised to Justine, she said, though with evident confusion, "Your daughter mistakes, my good woman, I told her I would have the money for her to-morrow morning."

"God help us, then!" replied the old woman, bursting into tears, "it is always so —to-morrow, and to-morrow—we shall all be dead before your to-morrow comes to us, madam."

"Allow me to lend you the twenty-five dollars, Mrs. Layton," said Gertrude. Mrs. Layton nodded her acceptance, took the bills and transferred them to the woman, who, thus unexpectedly relieved, turned her

streaming eyes to the source whence the relief came. She had not before noticed Gertrude. She now curtesied low to her, and, in the excess of her gratitude, kissed her hands; and looking at her again, she seemed struck with some new emotion, and murmured and repeated, "it is—it is—it must be—for the love of Heaven, my young lady, let me speak with you alone!" Gertrude, at an utter loss to conjecture the reason of this sudden and mysterious interest, accompanied the old woman into the entry. As soon as they were alone, "If there is mercy in your heart, young lady," she said, "go along with me—there's not a moment to be lost—Justine will tell you so." She opened the nursery-door, summoned Justine, and whispered to her; and Justine said earnestly, though with less impetuosity than her mother, "Indeed, Miss, you had best go with her—you need fear nothing. She may mistake, but if she's right, ye'll be sorry one day, tender hearted as ye are, if ye refuse her—that is, if it is as my mother thinks, ye'll grieve that ye did not go—indeed ye will."

"For the love of God, Justine, stop talking, and bring the young lady's hat for her." The hat and cloak were brought, and Gertrude, feeling much like a person groping in utter darkness, accompanied her conductor to a miserable little dwelling, at the upper extremity of Elm-street.

CHAPTER III.

"O Death !——
The great, the wealthy, fear thy blow,
From pomp and pleasure torn;
But oh ! a bless'd relief to those,
That weary-laden mourn." BURNS.

GERTRUDE'S conductor had hurried on in advance of her, partly, as it seemed, to preserve a respectful distance, and partly to avoid any communication with her. When she was within her humble dwelling, she mounted to the second story, and, winding her way through a dark narrow passage to the extremity of a back building, she reached a door, at which she stopped for a moment; then, placing her finger on her lips, in token of silence, she signed to Miss Clarence to await her, opened the door, and disappeared.

Gertrude heard a low murmur within, but nothing to afford a clue to the old woman's purpose. 'If I am brought hither,' she thought, 'to be moved to charity by an extraordinary spectacle of wretchedness, why this secresy? —why Justine's and her mother's strange allusions?' The door was re-opened, and her name pronounced by a well-known voice, in a feeble, tender, and tranquil tone. At the same time, the old woman, in explanation of the part she had acted, held up before Gertrude the picture of Trenton-falls. Gertrude sprang forward, exclaiming "Louis Seton!" She stood beside him, pressed his pale, emaciated hand to her lips, and expressed, in her asking eye, what her tongue could not utter. The old woman remained at the door, wringing her hands, and giving vent in her own language, to her interpretation of a scene that appeared, in her simple view, to tell the common tale of true love and a broken heart on one side; and of disdain, and late relenting on the other.

Seton was wrapped in a flannel gown, and sustained by pillows in an upright position. His bed was drawn as near as possible to

the hearth. A single chair, and a small table, on which lay some implements of his art, and a bible, and some vials, were all the furniture of his room; its neatness and order indicated the kind care of his hostess.

His form was attenuated, his hand bloodless, a consuming color burned in his hollow cheeks, his brow was pale and fixed as marble, his eye bright as if the soul had there concentrated all its fires, and his mouth, that flexible feature that first betrays the mutation of feeling, was serene and rigid, as if the seal of death were already set upon it.

At the first sight of Gertrude, a faint color overspread his brow and temples; his lips trembled, and his bosom heaved: he very soon however recovered his composure, and said, "Do not weep my dear friend, but rather rejoice with me."

"Nay, nay," cried the old woman, advancing, "weep on, child; for the love of Christ, weep on, till his dying lips shall speak the word of peace to you."

"Dying!" echoed Gertrude, (for that was the only word that made a distinct impression on her sense); dying! oh, it cannot be.

He must have a physician, and better lodgings. My good friend, hasten back to Mrs. Layton's, and bring my servant hither.

"Bless you, young lady, it's too late; it's a miracle he has lasted to see ye; and ye'd better use the spared minutes to lighten your conscience."

Seton smiled faintly. "She is right, Gertrude; I am dying; but do not let that grieve you; death is, to me, the happiest circumstance of my existence;" then turning to the old woman, he added, "Marie, I have nothing to forgive this lady; she has been an angel of mercy to me."

"God forgive me! she looks like it; ah, pity," she exclaimed, as the other natural solution of this sad meeting occurred to her simple mind, "ah, pity, pity that ye ever parted! pity that ye have so met!"

Seton manifested no emotion at these vehement exclamations, but calmly told Marie he had much to communicate to his friend; and she, after mending the fire, and arranging some emollients, provided by a dispensary-physician, left the apartment.

"Oh, Louis," said Gertrude, "why have you let us remain in such cruel ignorance of your condition? You have not surely ever for a moment doubted my father's sincere affection for you—or mine?"

"No, Gertrude, never."

"And you certainly knew there was nothing I desired so much as to serve you."

"Yes; I well knew there was nothing too much to expect from you, and your noble-minded father; but I have been sick, and diseased in mind, Gertrude."

"And was that a reason why you should fly from the offices of affection?"

"Reason! I have been deprived of reason, and long before my reason was gone, my feelings were diseased and perverted, and my pride unsubdued. I shrank from an accumulating load of obligation. One generous feeling I had. I could not bear to be to you, Gertrude, like the veiled skeletons at the feasts of the Egyptians, for ever presenting before you gloomy images, and calling up sad thoughts."

"Oh, how wrong you were, Louis! I

had so few objects of affection! Next to my father, you were most important to my happiness."

Louis pressed her hand to his lips. "I was wrong," he said; "I underrated the generosity of your affection, and I grossly magnified my own miseries; but it's all past now; you will forgive me, Gertrude?"

"Forgive you! do not speak of forgiveness —I never, never shall forget that you have suffered such extremity; and that it has come to this——"

"My dear friend, do not afflict yourself thus—my troubles have all ended happily." There was a singular contrast and change in both Gertrude and Seton. He was collected and serene, as if he had already touched the shore of eternal peace—she agitated, as one still tempest-tost on the uncertain waves of life. But, after a little while, she regained her usual ascendancy over her emotions, and, ashamed that she had for a moment disturbed his holy peace, she sat down beside him, and listened, with tolerable composure, to his relation of the

particulars of his life, since they parted. During his recital he had frequent turns of fainting, but they were relieved by intervals of rest.

"My life is so far spent," he said, "that I can only glance at the past. There was much, of which you were ignorant, Gertrude, that aggravated my malady before we left Clarenceville for Trenton. The immediate cause of my melancholy was suspected, if not known, and I was subjected to the gossiping scrutiny of our neighbours, and the vulgar intimations of the servants. Coarse minds graduate others by their external condition. You were rich, and I was poor, and therefore in their estimation, on their level. You remember the circumstances that led me to betray my cherished passion. My nerves were laid bare by this exposure, and, while I shrank from the slightest touch, I was told that one said, 'it was a shame for a beggarly drawing-master to take advantage of Mr. Clarence's generosity,' and another said, 'still waters run deep, but who would have thought of Louis Seton playing such a game?' and 'she has served him

right—she will carry her fortune to a better market than Louis Seton's.' "

"Oh, spare me—spare me, Louis."

"I repeat this to you, Gertrude, because it is my only apology for having yielded to a sickly sensibility, compounded of physical weakness, pride, and humility."

"I want to know no more, Louis; you have suffered, and I have been the cause."

"The cause was innocent, and the suffering is past, Gertrude—therefore listen patiently. We went to Trenton. Delirious as I was, I perfectly remembered our progress over those wild rocks—with what skill and resolution you lured me on and protracted my last act of madness, till I was saved by a wonderful intervention. At the time, I believed my preserver to be a supernatural being. I fancied, in the lawless vagaries of my mind, that his face had been revealed to me in a dream; but afterwards I remembered the resemblance was to a head you once painted from memory—the face of a beautiful youth, the friend, as you told me, of your brother. Gertrude, do not avert your face. I know not what that deep

blush means, but nothing it *can* mean would disturb me now. How am I changed! Do you remember that, proud of your proficiency in my art, I wished to show the head to your father, and that to end my importunity you threw it in the fire? What hours of tormenting thoughts—what nights of watchfulness did that simple act cost me! so do we selfishly shrink from the appropriation of affections to another, even when unattainable by ourselves." Seton's voice faltered for a moment. "As I retrace my former feelings," he continued, "their shadows cross me. But to return to the night at Trenton. The image of your figure, as I saw you when I first opened my eyes, kneeling, and a celestial expression lighting up your face, remained in my mind in all the freshness of its actual presentment. It abode with me in darkness, in solitude, in misery—in madness, Gertrude."

"After I escaped from your father's beneficent offers at Trenton, I made my way to New York—I know not how—my recollections of that time are like the confused and imperfect images of a distressful dream.

I have since learned that I was found perishing in the street. It was impossible to identify me, and I was taken to the almshouse, and placed with the maniacs, supported by public charity. I cannot now, when all other evils have lost their power to wound me, look back without shuddering on that period when neglect, injudicious treatment, privation, darkness, a sense of wrong, conscious degradation, misery in every form, exasperated my disease. Oh, Gertrude, is it not strange that men rioting in luxuries, and still more strange that those who are blessed with quiet homes of health and happiness, should permit their brethren, suffering under the visitation of the severest of physical evils, to languish in the receptacles of poverty—in the dungeons allotted to crime?"

Gertrude answered this appeal by a solemn resolution, which she afterwards religiously performed, to make a rich offering to an unequivocal and neglected form of charity. Seton proceeded: "Gertrude, the person whose name I have since ascertained to be Roscoe, again appeared to rescue me from a

more dreadful fate than that from which he saved me at Trenton. I know not what motive led him to inspect the wards of the alms-house, but there he found me, scratching on the wall the outlines of the scene at Trenton, with a bone which I had taken from my soup, and sharpened for that purpose. He instantly recognised me. I hailed him as God's messenger to me, and besought him to release me. He listened to me—he looked with deep interest at the outline I had traced, and, after ascertaining that I was harmless and convalescing, he promised to take me from my imprisonment. The same day he returned, and conveyed me to a farmer's house in a retired spot on Long Island." Seton paused, and Gertrude, released from the intense attention she had given, covered her face and wept without restraint. Her bitter grief for all Seton had endured was mingled with a feeling very different, but scarcely less affecting—a feeling that Heaven had linked her sympathies with Roscoe's, had mysteriously interwoven the chain of their purposes and feelings. She felt keenly, too, the delicacy which Ros-

coe had manifested in withholding from her the particulars of Seton's sufferings, and of his generous part in ministering to his relief. "Gertrude," resumed Seton, in a voice of the deepest tenderness, "I cannot mistake this emotion—you know Roscoe—it is as it should be—"

She started as if the secrets of her inmost heart had been revealed. She cleared her voice, and made an effort to speak, for she could not permit such an inference from her emotion. Seton laid his hand on hers, "I ask no explanation—no communication, Gertrude." Again he reverted to himself. "Never shall I forget the first days of my emancipation—my keen enjoyment of liberty and nature. It was early in October—the sky was cloudless—the air serene and balmy. Oh, how exquisitely I relished those common and neglected bounties of Heaven! I lived in the open air. The clear soft skies, the transparent atmosphere—all nature seemed to me instinct with the Spirit of God; and it was so, to my awakened mind. The world appeared to me to lie in one dark total eclipse, and myself to be conveyed beyond

the reign of shadows—to dwell in light—to be alone in the universe with God."

These blissful days soon passed, and I was confined to the house by inclement weather. Roscoe sent me some implements for painting—I seized them as a hungry man would have snatched at food. I finished at one sitting the scene at Trenton. I perceived myself the extravagance of the picture, and sat down to the work anew. I painted another, and another, and another. Each was better than the last, and each indicated a correspondent progress in the recovery of reason. The application to an habitual employment restored my thoughts to their natural order of succession, and my feelings to their natural temperature.

"I never communicated my name, or spoke of you to Roscoe. For a long time I retained my first illusion, and believed he was a supernatural being; and it was very long before I could bear to pronounce your name. By degrees these illusions and extravagancies lost their force. I no longer withheld myself from you and your father from pride, or morbid sensibility, but I

wished to test my moral strength in solitude, before I encountered new trials; my brothers, I had reason to think, believed me dead—I wished, for a time, to be dead to the world. I wrote to Roscoe, and expressed my gratitude, and acquainted him with my determination.

"It is now eight weeks since I left my place of refuge—a changed man. My mind, like the body refreshed by sleep, awoke to new vigor. The engrossing passion that had absorbed my faculties, was gone—no, not gone, Gertrude—but converted to a peaceful, rational sentiment, that accords with happiness, and is immortal in its nature—a sentiment as distinct from the passion that had agitated my being, as the elements are in their natural and gentle ministry from their wildest strife and desolation.*

"I was changed too in other respects. The world, 'at best a broken reed, but oft a

* It is remarked by an able medical writer on the diseases of the mind, that persons whose madness has been induced by love, rarely retain the passion after the recovery of reason. Such a circumstance is related of one of the Princes of Condé.

spear'—the world had lost its power to wound me. The operations of the spirit are so mysterious, the modes of its communication with the Divinity so incomprehensible, that I shrink from attempting to communicate, even to you, Gertrude, the convictions of my own mind. I had new views, new hopes, and purposes—whence came they? not from the outward world—they were the inspiration of Heaven.

"I applied myself to painting; the avails of my constant labour were small; and while, from the elated state of my mind, I was unconscious of the presence of disease, consumption was snapping my life. The progress of the malady was accelerated by my rashness. A painter had employed me to finish the draperies of some portraits. I was so exhausted by the labours of the day, that I shrank from walking to my lodgings, and I slept on his bare floor. At the end of the week I was carried home; there a new shock awaited me—my picture, my sacred treasure, had been sent to an auction, to raise the pittance due to my landlady. I forgot my sickness and my weakness, and

rushed out of the house to recover it. Again I met Roscoe, who seemed always sent to me in my extremity—he had the picture, and restored it to me; and I confess to you I was scarcely less grateful than when he saved my life, or when he restored my liberty. I removed my lodgings to this place. I have painfully earned a subsistence till the last ten days, and since then I have received every kindness from this good old Swiss woman."

"But why, why," asked Gertrude, "have you not written to us?"

"I have twice written, but received no answer; I knew this was accidental. I had relinquished all hope of hearing from you; God be praised that old Marie met you, and was induced, by your resemblance to the picture, to ask you to come here."

Gertrude assigned her father's absence from Clarenceville as the cause of Seton's receiving no replies to his letters; and then, but not without an obvious effort, she asked, 'why he had not communicated his wants to Roscoe?"

"I did, yesterday, send a note to the

post-office for him, but my hand was tremulous and stiff with cold, and the direction may not have been legible. But, truly, Gertrude, I have wanted little; a mortal sickness admits but few alleviations. My attendant has been kind, and what she could not provide for me, I have been satisfied without."

Nature had put forth her mysterious force —Gertrude's presence soothed and stimulated him, and Seton was sustained through his narrative by an energy of feeling that seemed to hold death in abeyance.

He had not spoken continuously, but with frequent and fearful interruptions, and as his voice died away in the conclusion, and his eyes became fixed in an eager, soul-piercing gaze, Gertrude, who had never before seen a human being in extremity, was appalled with the infallible tokens of approaching death. Seton laid her hand on his heart—" It beats feebly," he said, " my life is fast passing away;" and added, with an expression of some concern, " do you fear to stay alone with me, Gertrude?"

" No—no Louis! she replied, subduing

her natural shrinkings, "I have no fear—no wish, but to remain with you."

"I thank God!" said Seton, with a smile of sweet serenity, "my last wish is gratified—your presence, Gertrude, makes my dismissal happier."

Seton's fears of death had long been vanquished by the only force that can subdue its terrors—the force of religious faith. He had studied the Christian revelation faithfully, and he believed it, not with a mere intellectual cold assent, but with the rapture of the mortal who reads there the charter of his immortality—with the exultation of the prisoner who receives the promise of pardon and release. He found there the solution of his sufferings. What if his life had been a dark and forlorn scene? His brief sorrows had been God's ministers to prepare his spirit for inextinguishable happiness. What if he had wandered in dismal exile through a far and foreign land? His path lay homeward, and could he shrink and tremble when his foot was on the threshold of his Father's house? Oh, no. The decline of life was to him the crumbling of

his prison-walls. He had watched with joy, through solitary days and wakeful nights, the decay of the mortal mould, that encumbered and imprisoned his longing spirit.

Life had never, in its blithe and morning hour, been bright to him. His childhood had been neglected — his youth sickly — his manhood blasted—his affections, those ordained and sweetest springs of happiness, sources of misery. They were now elevated far above the accidents of life, and ready to expand and rest in the celestial region for which they were created.

Seton's voice was exhausted by the long effort it had sustained. He afterwards spoke little, but no power of language could have added force to his few and brief expressions of faith and tranquillity—to the eloquence of his silence, when his eye was raised in devotion, or beamed with holy revealings from the sanctuary of his soul. Gertrude's spirit rose with his. There was something affecting and elevating in her disregard of the circumstances of death—so appalling to the young and inexperienced—in her tender manifestations of sacred sympathy with the

departing spirit. Hour after hour passed away. Marie came in occasionally to render little services. The day was drawing to its close. The old woman beckoned Gertrude to the door. "He is changing fast," she said, and participating in a very old and general superstition, she added, "He will go with the turn of the tide: will you not have some one called?—it is a fearful thing, young lady, to bide alone."

Gertrude, though not without some natural reluctancy, would not permit it to interfere with the wish Seton had expressed, and she again assured Marie that she preferred no person should be summoned—and Marie, sorely against her own judgment, assented; but as she descended the stairs, meditating on the singular boldness of the young lady, she was summoned to the street-door by a loud knocking. She opened it to Gerald Roscoe, and inferring from his eager inquiries that he was a particular friend of Seton's, and rightly judging that there was no time to be lost in the preliminaries of ceremony, she bade him follow her. She opened the door of Seton's apartment, and signed

to Roscoe to approach cautiously. He did so, and when he reached the threshold, he stood as if he were spell-bound. Seton was too far gone, Gertrude too deeply absorbed to observe him.

The setting sun shone brightly through the only window in the apartment. Seton's eye was turned towards it. As the last ray faded away, he lifted his eye to Gertrude, and said with perfect indifference, "My last moment is bright too, Gertrude." A slight convulsion passed over his features. He made a sudden effort to raise his head. Gertrude rested it on her bosom. A celestial smile, a quivering light from the soul played over his lips; he half uttered the last prayer of faith, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!' and all was over.——Gertrude remained motionless, bending over the vacant form. The outward world vanished from before her. It seemed to her that the veil was lifted that envelopes the unknown world, and that she touched its blissful shore with the released spirit.

But to return from this high mysterious vision, to the silent chamber, and the lifeless

form!—to the penetrating sense of separation and loss!—*this* is the terror of death. Death comes to the body only; it is but the change of that frame that is at one moment the expressive organ of the ever-living spirit, and the next, worthless clay, that mocks our grief with its stillness and immobility. This was the moment of grief and unrepressed tears; afterwards came the grateful considerations that she had been permitted to witness, and in some degree to minister to the peace of Seton's departure—that his conflict with the jarring elements of this world was ended, and that she had seen the demonstration of the omnipotent power of religion.

Roscoe watched her with intense interest as she bent over Seton, her hands clasped, her face lit with the tenderness of affection, her eye raised in the fervency of devotion. She pressed her lips to Seton's brow. 'She loves him,' thought Roscoe, 'but it is with that excellence with which angels love good men.'

"Ye'd best speak to the young lady," said Marie, who thought that time enough had

been allowed to the exclusive indulgence of Miss Clarence's feelings. Gertrude turned at the sound of her voice, and for the first time perceived Gerald Roscoe.

The sight of him excited no selfish emotion. Her feelings were now all in one channel, and he appeared to her only as Seton's friend and benefactor. She advanced, gave him her hand frankly, and expressed her sorrow that he had not come sooner, and her warm unmeasured gratitude for his generous kindness to Seton.

The intercourse of young persons of different sexes is so apt to be embarrassed by the conscious desire to please, and by the artificial modes of polished society, that the genuine motions of the mind are seldom embodied in unpremeditated language. Gertrude had never before met Roscoe without a degree of embarrassment that imparted to her manners a slight shade of constraint; but now, under the influence of deep and strongly excited sensibility, she forgot all that was of peculiar interest in their relation to each other, and talked to him with the freedom of intimate friendship. The occasion gave a

tenderness to her manner, and her raised feelings an eloquence to her expressions, that penetrated Roscoe's heart. She did not, as on every former occasion, studiously avoid any allusion to herself, nor measure her phrases as if she were beset with rocks and quicksands. She spoke of her affection for Seton as if he had been her brother, and only veiled a part of the truth when she imputed the disease of his mind entirely to a morbid sensibility preying on a delicate frame.

Roscoe perceived that Gertrude was off her guard, and seemed utterly to have forgotten the secret she had so sedulously kept. He expected that some accidental word would relieve his curiosity, which, though rebuked for a moment, had revived, and put him on the rack of alternate hope, and disappointment. One natural question, one insidious word, might elicit what he so ardently desired to know; but that word would not be generous or honorable, and therefore could not be uttered by him. He was provoked at himself, that this importunate thought should violate the sanctity of such a

moment; still it would not down. He turned his eye to Seton's lifeless form. He gazed at Gertrude with a far deeper interest than he had ever before felt; he listened with thrilling interest to all she said; yet that impertinent query, 'who can she be?' disturbed the harmony of his mind, like a creaking hinge. He heard the old woman again mounting the stairs—'now,' he thought, her name must be spoken, or something said that will dissolve this spell.' But Marie approached Gertrude, who was silently gazing on Seton with the last yearnings of affection, and addressed her, according to her usual custom, in the third person —"A carriage was waiting for the lady," she said, "and here was a note from the mistress." Roscoe smiled, in spite of his vexation, at the simple mode in which his hopes were baffled.

The note was from Mrs. Layton, in reply to a line Gertrude had sent, explaining her detention. "My sweetest Gertrude," said the note, "I send a carriage for you—you " must indeed come home—you are exposing " yourself to too severe a trial—I should

" have come immediately to you, but my
" feelings unfit me for *scenes*. Poor, poor
" Seton ! 'he dies a most rare youth of me-
" lancholy.' How affecting such a death, in
" this heartless world ! You probably will
" prefer that the funeral solemnities should
" be at Trinity-Church. As soon as we
" know your wishes, Layton will make all
" the arrangements.

" *Dieu te garde, ma chère.*

G. L.

'Funeral solemnities at Trinity-Church!' repeated Gertrude to herself, 'an ostentatious funeral would be a mockery to him who so shunned the world's eye while living.'

" Mr. Seton," she said, turning to Roscoe, " was as you well know, a total stranger in the city. I am reluctant to leave the last rites to hirelings; and if you, Mr. Roscoe—"

Roscoe interrupted her faltering request, with an assurance that she had only anticipated him—that he should make every necessary arrangement, and should feel himself

happy in being permitted to render the last tribute of humanity to her friend.

Gertrude expressed her gratitude for all he had done, and for all he promised to do, with so much warmth and gracefulness that Roscoe felt that he had given no equivalent for such thanks from such a source; 'and yet he thought, if she does feel obliged to me, there is a boon withheld, which would requite them a thousandfold.' But this boon was not even hinted at, and Gertrude had actually left the apartment, and was in the carriage on her way home, before the question occurred to her, and then it struck her, like an electric flash, whether she had betrayed her name. She reviewed all that had passed; she tried to recall every word, but, that she was not able to satisfy herself, is the best proof of the engrossing emotions Seton's death had excited.

The heroines of our times live in a business world, and even funeral rites cannot be a matter of pure sentiment. Miss Clarence had been too long intrusted with the responsibility of pecuniary affairs, to fall into femi-

nine obliviousness in matters of expense, and as soon as she was in her own apartment, she sent for Justine, and, giving her a sum of money, she requested her to place it in her mother's hands, to be appropriated to Mr. Seton's funeral charges. To this she added a compensation for Marie's services, and a generous reward for her fidelity and kindness.

Justine, accustomed to Mrs. Layton's extravagant expressions of feeling, and her utter neglect of duties, had fallen into the common error of generalizing her individual experience, and honestly believed that all fine ladies exhibited their sensibilities in nervous affection, and were subject to lapses of memory in money affairs; and she regarded Miss Clarence with a wonder and satisfaction, similar to that of a naturalist, who is analyzing a new species in nature.

"*Mon Dieu!*" she exclaimed, as she stowed away the separate rolls of bills in her pocket-book, "how singular! my sweet young lady, you look quite spent, and yet, God bless you—you think of all this as if

you had no feelings, and were not a lady, at all."

'Any man may die heroically in company,' said Voltaire. He *lived* in 'company,' and it was his misfortune to find food for his scoffing wit in the perpetual masquerade of artificial society. He fed his own vanity with its natural and abounding nutriment—the follies of his species. But he should have raised his eye from the feet of clay, to the fine gold of the image—he should have penetrated beyond the seats of the money-changers, to the sacred fire that burnt within the holy of holies—to the divine principle in the soul of man. Had he been familiar with the retreats of unaffected and unostentatious virtue—had he witnessed the quiet death of the faithful, unsullied by superstition, exaggeration, or self-delusion, he might have been saved from his unbelief in human virtue, the most dangerous of all scepticism—he might have employed his delightful, unimitated and inimitable talents in developing the noble capacities, and advancing the high destinies of man, instead of "*riant*

comme un démon, ou comme un singe, des misères de cette espèce humaine.

Let the sceptic enter such a chamber of death as Louis Seton's, and see the eye of faith kindle with celestial light, as the poor struggler with the evils of life approaches the moment of release—let him observe the profound peace that earth can no longer trouble; and then let him, *if he can*, employ the mind God has given him, to controvert the immortality of that mind—the truth, that sustains man amid wrong, oppression, disappointment, calamity in every form, and in that fearful visitation which comes alike to all.

CHAPTER IV.

"S'il était reconnu qu'il faut considérer la pensée comme une maladie contre laquelle un régime régulier est nécessaire, on ne saurait rien imaginer de mieux qu'un genre de distraction à la fois étourdissant et insipide."—MADAME DE STAEL.

TEN days subsequent to Seton's death passed away without any incident in the affairs of our *dramatis personæ* worthy of being recorded. Miss Clarence availed herself of a cold, (an auxiliary always at hand in a New York winter), as a pretext for remaining in her own apartment. She did not repine at Seton's death, but wisely regarded it as a happy release. She had, however, been too long and too affectionately attached to him not to be deeply affected by the knowledge of his sufferings, and not to yield her mind to the serious emotions and thoughts that death calls forth.

Nothing could be more opportune than this retirement to Emilie, who, under the pretext of devotion to her friend, sheltered herself from the observation of the world, and the ardent attentions of Pedrillo.

Mrs. Layton, conscious that she had fallen in Gertrude's esteem, and ambitious to regain the admiration that had been so flattering to her, exerted with fresh resolution all her powers of fascination. She endured a week's seclusion without apparent *ennui*. She adapted herself with nice tact to the current of Gertrude's feelings—was serious, sympathetic, and sentimental; but it would not all do. Gertrude had waked from her dream, and imagination could not repeat its illusions. The qualities that had captivated her, had vanished in smoke, like the body of the Arabian magician; and Gertrude's incredulity in the reality of that which had once deceived her, was not, like the fisherman's—affected. When an eloquent or enthusiastic strain flowed from Mrs. Layton's lips, 'why,' thought our practical heroine, 'is not that fervid feeling directed to Emilie?'—'why is it not employed to avert

her impending fate?' When Mrs. Layton complained of her destiny, and lamented that she had no adequate object to employ her faculties and fill the void in her heart, Gertrude thought of her neglected children. 'If her conjugal happiness is blasted,' she said, 'can a *mother* want objects to elicit her noblest faculties, and her tenderest affections?' As an intimate intercourse brought their minds into close comparison, Gertrude perceived they were not, on any subject, attuned to the same key. They were both well versed in the elegant literature of the day, but their tastes were always in opposition. In poetry, Mrs. Layton preferred that which addressed the passions, Gertrude that which touched the affections. Mrs. Layton was an idolatress of Byron. Her imagination was stimulated by the tragic history of his heroes, whose feelings are all passions, and whose deeds are almost all crimes. She delighted in his descriptions of the outward world—the visible paradise of poetry, which the evil spirit of his mighty genius has sometimes overshadowed with its own image. Gertrude loved all the poets—

the glorious company—but she preferred the touching simplicity, the penetrating tenderness of Burns, and the perfect, yet poetic fidelity of our own Bryant, the mirror of nature, that like a serene lake, gives back the image of the delicate floweret and the lofty tree, as clearly defined, as soft and beautiful as their originals in the ethereal atmosphere. Mrs. Layton revelled in the Sybilline revelations of Madame de Staël. Gertrude's soul was thrilled by them, but she preferred Miss Edgeworth—preferred the beneficent genius who has made the actual social world better and happier, to her who, by a motion of her wand, could create an imaginative world, and disclose a possible, but unattainable beauty. Among heroines, Corinne was Mrs. Layton's favorite. Gertrude preferred Rebecca—her who conquered, to her who was the victim of love. Even Jeanie Deans, (pardon her humble taste, gentle reader), that personification of truth—that unvarnished picture of moral beauty, moved her heart more than the gifted Corinne. It would be an endless task to enumerate the diversity of their

tastes in nature, in music, in all the arts. Mrs. Layton's sensibility was the fruit of a highly cultivated imagination; Gertrude's, the instinct of a generous heart. Mrs. Layton's required high stimulants, and artificial excitements—the miraculous touch of the prophet to bring it forth. Gertrude's was moved by natural impulses, and flowed from an ever-living fountain. Thus opposed in the very texture of their characters, it was impossible for either party to derive much enjoyment from a continued exclusive intercourse, and Mrs. Layton was impatient to plunge again into society, where her ready wit and graceful facile manners were available qualities.

"My dear Gertrude," said she, one particularly bright morning, "I cannot consent to your and Emilie's immuring yourselves any longer. Our door-bell will be rung by a dear five hundred friends, at least, to-day; and it is really a farce, when you are so well, and looking so remarkably well, too, to send them away with a mere bulletin of your health—so, unless you chose to permit the real cause of your sentimental se-

clusion to peep out, I beg you will grace my parlor."

"We are your subjects, and owe you passive obedience," replied Gertrude, who, as soon as she perceived her liability to excite curiosity, determined to avoid it.

"You are a dear, reasonable creature, Gertrude, and I wish I had made my request sooner, for really I have been tormented to death with Pedrillo's impatience, (poor fellow! it's no wonder, it will not do for Em' to dilly dally much longer),—and Layton, too, has been in the worst possible humor—by the way, he left a note for you this morning—some one of your honorable suitors has probably chosen him for mediator"—she rang the bell, and ordered the servant to bring Miss Clarence a note from Mr. Layton's dressing-room table. It was brought, and contained no soft intercession, but a nonchalant sort of a request that Miss Clarence would favor him with the loan of five hundred dollars for a few days. Gertrude hesitated for a moment. She habitually regarded her fortune, like the other gifts of Providence,

as a sacred trust, to be applied to the best uses, and she could not appropriate so considerable a sum without being somewhat disturbed by the belief that it was to be applied to an idle or profligate purpose.

Mrs. Layton, who, though she had not chosen to appear so, was really aware of the contents of the note, watched the expression of Gertrude's countenance, and put her own interpretation on it. 'Oh,' thought she, 'how unlike poor me! If I had her wealth, I should not give a second thought to so pitiful a sum! but money does so harden the heart!' Gertrude hesitated but a moment. 'I cannot refuse,' thought she, 'while a guest in his house;' and thus quieting her conscience, she signed a check for the amount, and enclosed it in a note to Layton.

"Ah—is that it?" said Mrs. Layton, looking at her with a smile, and speaking in a tone of surprise. "Poor Layton! alas! alas! Gertrude, we *do* live in a 'bank-note world,' and happy are they who have enough of this mundane trash——But come, my dearest, finish your toilet—thank Heaven, you, as well as myself, look the better for

its tender mercies—but Emilie—it is too provoking—she has just tucked her wavy locks behind her ears, and she looks like the beau-ideal of painting, or like

> "The forms that, wove in Fancy's loom,,
> Float in light visions round the poet's head."

Upon my word, I think she becomes the *penseroso*."

"Oh, mother!" said Emilie. It was but a word—but Gertrude thought a word spoken in such a tone of feeling and remonstrance should have pierced the mother's heart. Emilie was standing beside her, clasping her bracelet. Gertrude kissed her. "This fair round cheek was made for smiles, not tears; and," she added, glancing her eye at Mrs. Layton, and speaking with an energy not at all agreeable to that lady, "God forbid she should be doomed to them!"

"Amen!" responded Mrs. Layton. And now, young ladies, our orisons being ended, let us descend to mortal affairs"—and smoothing her brow, she led the way down stairs. As they reached the lower entry,

the door-bell rang, and Mrs. Layton, glancing her eye through the side-window, exclaimed, "there's Patty Sprague!—I wish she were a thousand miles off." The ladies passed into the parlour, and the servant to the door, followed by one of the children who happened to be loitering there. The door was opened, and Miss Patty appeared—"Ah!" said she to the little boy who was springing on the door-step, and pulled back by the servant, "Ah, Julian, is mamma at home, dear?"

"Yes, Miss Patty," he replied, and like a bird, vexed that the door of his cage was reclosed upon him, he pecked at the first object within his reach. "Yes, Miss Patty, but she said she wished you were a thousand miles off."

"Never tell tales out of school, dearie," rejoined Miss Patty, patting the boy's cheek, and she proceeded to the parlour, without being in the slightest degree checked or irritated. Miss Patty belonged to the single sisterhood; a community which, in the march of civilization, is losing its distinctive characteristics, but is still strikingly

marked in the 'lone conspicuity' of some of its members. Among these few, Miss Patty stood out in such bold relief, that her image would have befitted the banner of the order. She was a belle before the revolution; had played 'cruel Barbara Allen' to one or two patriots, who, unlike poor 'Jemmy Grove,' survived and lived to fight vigorously for their country. She had flirted with British officers, and been actually engaged (she said so!) to a refugee tory, who could not (he did not!) return to keep his vows. Miss Patty, however, bore the sad chances and changes of this mortal life most kindly. Her vanity, if it had no aliment in the present, and could hope for none in the future, was pampered by memory. She had a good-natured, gossiping, selfish sympathy with the world, but no love, hatred, or malice for any individual of that world. She hoarded her patrimony, and lived by *spending the day* in turn with a large circle of affluent friends; some bound to her by the tie of distant kindred, and others by old acquaintance. If any of her circle fell into adversity, Miss Patty forgot them; and why

should such a fly as Miss Patty descend the wheel, when she might as well buzz about those who were on the top? She was generally tolerated, and sometimes welcomed —for she was a walking and talking chronicle—possessed of the last information on the floating topics of the day, and in her humble way, and to our prosing world, she filled the place of a wandering minstrel, or itinerant *conteur*.

"Glad to see you down stairs, young ladies," she said, as she entered the parlour. "Every body is mourning about your sickness, Miss Clarence—parties put off, and hearts breaking. I have come to spend the day with you, dear"—turning, half confidentially, to Mrs. Layton.

"How unfortunate, Miss Patty—we are engaged out to dine."

"That suits me better yet—I'll sit awhile, and run over and dine with the Porters, and spend to-morrow with you, dear." It was a part of Miss Patty's tactics to have an engagement one day a-head. She was no philosopher in the abstract; but what is life but a series of philosophical truths?

and Miss Patty perceived that her friend consented, without much visible reluctance, to an evil twenty-four hours distant; and when it came, it was in the class of inevitables, and, of course, submitted to with grace. As soon as Miss Patty had received Mrs. Layton's bow of acquiescence in her arrangement, she turned to the young ladies.

"Dear! how pale and thin Emilie is looking—but it's so with all engaged ladies—I looked just so, before the revolution." Gertrude smiled—she could not help it—at the revolution that must have occurred since Miss Patty could have resembled the figure of her friend—as pale, certainly, and as beautiful as the most exquisite statue. "You smile, Miss Clarence—you don't remember—oh, no, you can't remember—but, perhaps you never heard about my engagement to Mr. Pinkie?"

"Bless you, Miss Patty!" said Mrs. Layton, eager to avert the history, "indeed she has—who has not heard it?"

"True—true—it was pretty well known. Well, Emmy, dear, I hope you will have better luck than I had. I believe you are

one of the lucky kind; only think, to come out—be *such* a belle, and engaged to a *real* nabob, before she is seventeen; that's what I call a run of luck!"

"But the game is not finished, and the tables may turn," said Gertrude, with an emphasis that sounded like a celestial prophecy to Emilie, like treason to her mother, and very like envy to Miss Patty.

"That is not hardly fair, Miss Gertrude," she said, "you have brought Emilie's color into her cheeks, with the bare thoughts of it. Never mind, dear, there's no war breaking out now, as in my day, and—but here's the very person in question."

Pedrillo entered; and while he, on the score of not having seen Emilie for a week, was raising her reluctant hand to his lips, Miss Patty continued to Gertrude, her handkerchief before her face, and in a depressed tone—"the handsomest man I have seen since the evacuation! nothing boyish, no American slouch—you never saw the British officers, Miss Clarence?"

"I never had that happiness, Miss Patty."

"Then you never saw what I call *men*.

Mr. Pedrillo has that same air, so erect, and finished, and *je ne sais quoi*, as the French say. Poor Mr. Pinkie had it too—but then he was born before the revolution. You know the Americans are very much degenerated."

"No, I was not aware of it," replied Gertrude, with seeming simplicity.

"My dear!—they certainly are. The English travellers and English reviews all say so—they tell me—I don't read such light things—but it is my opinion—and I am sure I ought to be a judge, for as Gerald Roscoe said to me once, 'Miss Patty,' said he, 'you have seen a great deal of life'—you need not smile, Miss Clarence, he did not mean any allusion to my age—he is too much of a gentleman for that. By the way, I met him this morning, and told him I always laid you out for him. 'Oh, bury the thought, Miss Patty,' said he, 'I cannot enter the lists against so many—my superiors and elders—saucy fellow! I suppose he alluded to Mr. Morley——but, la! what a certain sign it is if you mention a person, he is sure to appear——Good morn-

ing, Mr. Morley—I declare, I don't see that you grow old at all."

Mr. Morley, who had entered, bowed rather coolly to the compliment, and then said to Mrs. Layton, though his eye turned most significantly to Gertrude, that he had just received a letter from Washington, announcing Mr. Randolph Marion's appointment.

Gertrude dared not look at Emilie, but she expressed her own pleasure in the most animated terms. Morley was delighted. "My dear Miss Clarence," he said in a low tone, "I am too happy to have obliged you."

"You have obliged me, materially, Mr. Morley, and I am delighted to believe that you will be rewarded for any exertions in my friend's behalf, by the consciousness of having given the public an officer of talent and integrity." This was not precisely the reward—the *quid pro quo*, to which Mr. Morley looked; and this he was intimating to Miss Clarence, in oracular phrases, which she fortunately might or might not understand, as suited her, when a troop of fashionable ladies attended by Major Daisy, Flint,

and a half a dozen other gentlemen, entered. Never did the arrival of a *corps de réserve* prove a more timely relief, than this to poor Emilie; who, in a state of nervous agitation, was giving all her thoughts to Marion's rising fortune, and trying to avert her treacherous cheek from Pedrillo, and close her ear against the ardent language that he was addressing to her, while he appeared to be carelessly playing with a fire-screen.

The usual formula of morning chit-chat was run over; that mystery of mysteries eagerly inquired into, 'how *did* you take such a sad cold?'—all the changes rung upon the weather—'it had been very damp'—'it was very fine'—'nothing more capricious than the weather'—'Mrs. L. had a delightful party'—'Mrs. K.'s was very dull'—'none of the L.s there, on account of the old gentleman's death; *charming* old man he was, pity he had not lived a few days longer.'

A knot of ladies, bold aspirants to the reputation of *fine women*, were announcing their opinion of a new poem, and the last novel. "Is the Corsair a favorite of yours?"

"Oh!" replied the sapient young lady, to whom the inquiry was addressed, "Oh, I doat on it — was there ever such a sweet creature as Conrad?"

"No," said another lady, in answer to an innocent query, "I never read *American* novels, there's no high life in them."

The scene was constantly shifting, or rather the actors made their exits, and new ones appeared. The servant stood with the door half open: "Miss Clarence, you feel the draught: shut the door John," said our attentive friend Flint. John bowed respectfully, but did not move, and the reason of his deferred obedience was presently explained by voices, from the entry, breaking from a whisper into a gentle altercation. "Indeed, Mr. Roscoe, you must come in— it cannot be impossible."

"I would trample on impossibilities at your bidding, Miss Mayo, but——"

The rest of the sentence was intercepted by an exclamation from Flint—"I declare, there's my friend Roscoe; I promised, ten days ago, Miss Clarence, to introduce him to you,"—and, before Gertrude could inter-

pose a word, he darted off to force his patronage on Roscoe. A more potent voice was now raised: "Come in, Mr. Gerald Roscoe," said Mrs. Layton, "as lady of the manor, and entitled to all waifs and strays, I command you to come in,"—and Roscoe, preceded by two ladies, who, if they had been a trio, might have been mistaken for the graces in Parisian costume, entered the parlor. Mrs. Layton rose to receive them, with something very different in her manner from the mechanical politeness she addressed to ordinary guests. "For shame, Mr. Roscoe!" she said, "you, unfettered, unbound, and not half so old as the vagrant Greek, to resist the presence, as well as the voice of the syrens; and such syrens," she added, casting an admiring look at the elegant young ladies before her.

"I did not resist the voice of *the* syren," replied Roscoe, in a tone so depressed, as to be audible only to Mrs. Layton's, and one other ear—strange power of love! Gertrude sat at some distance from Mrs. Layton; her satellites, Morley and Daisy, stood before her. Morley was pouring out diplomatic compliments fraught with meaning, but

they were all lost on her. She was conscious of but one presence. From the first moment Roscoe's voice had reached her, she felt a stifling sensation—her heart beat almost audibly, and her first impulse was to run out of the room; but propriety, dignity, forbade. 'If I betray any emotion,' she thought, 'I shall hate myself—I shall be for ever degraded in his eyes—I cannot support an introduction to him in broad day-light, before all these persons—blockaded too by 'Morley, Daisy, & Co.'—how contemptible he will think my mystery!—why did not I tell him when we last met?—can this horrid suffocating feeling be faintness? — how ridiculous!—how disgraceful!"

"Bless me!" exclaimed Flint, who had returned to Miss Clarence's side, "how excessively pale you look!" Gertrude's alarm was augmented by this exclamation. She made no reply, but kept her eyes rivetted to the floor. "She's certainly faint," interrupted Flint: "Ladies, allow me to raise this window:" He made a bustling effort to effect this purpose.

"What is the matter?" asked half a dozen voices.

"Miss Clarence is faint," was the reply.

"Indeed I am not," said Gertrude, summoning all her energy to shelter and suppress a momentary weakness, and stimulated by the danger of exposing to Roscoe an emotion as flattering to him, as humbling to herself; "indeed I am not in the least faint, I never fainted in my life—pray close that window. You are very good, Mr. Flint, but you made a strange mistake."

"Begging your pardon, Miss Clarence," replied Mr. Flint, with well-founded pertinacity, "I don't think I mistook at all. Persons are not always conscious when they are going to faint — you were certainly deathly pale, and I'm pretty sure you breathed short—at any rate, your colour came with the first breath of fresh air."

'What odious details,' thought Gertrude, shrinking from the exposure of these particulars; and with a feeling of a doubtful shade, between spirit and temper, she replied, "You must really, Mr. Flint, allow me to judge of my own sensations." She was nerved by the courageous sound of her

own voice, and she ventured to cast one rapid glance around the room in quest of Roscoe. He had disappeared. 'Had he seen her?' She did not know, and dared not ask.

"Your alarm, Mr. Flint, was *mal-à-propos*," said Miss Mayo, the eldest of the sisters who had entered with Roscoe. "I was, just at the moment of your frightful exclamations, going to present a friend to Miss Clarence—he disappeared while we were all looking at you, Miss Clarence — Mr. Roscoe, the cleverest young man in New York." Miss Mayo spoke unadvisedly. She did not dream that she could encroach on the self-estimation of any one present; but John Smith and Major Daisy, echoing her last words, 'the cleverest!' in a tone of unfeigned surprise, taught her the indefinite extent of the boundary-lines of vanity.

"Yes," said Miss Patty Sprague, "Miss Mayo is right. I heard the chancellor say, myself, that Gerald Roscoe would be at the head of his profession, in a few years; and I am right glad of it—it is pleasant to see

good luck happen to such a genteel family as the Roscoes—I have spent many a pleasant day in his father's house."

"Do you ever spend the day, Miss Patty," asked Mrs. Layton, "with Mrs. Roscoe?"

"No," replied Miss Patty, with a deep sigh, "since she gave up her house, I have somehow lost sight of her."

"Miss Patty's vision, I should imagine, was too imperfect for the dim light of obscured fortunes," said Gertrude in an under voice to Miss Mayo.

"Yes, but just observe with what an eagle-eye she can look at an ascending luminary.—Do you know, Miss Patty, that Mrs. Spencer is going to bring out her pretty daughter, and has sent out invitations for an immense party?"

"La! yes, dear, I heard so—a charming, intelligent woman, Mrs. Spencer. I have not been there since Mr. Spencer's failure—I am truly glad they have got up in the world again—I wish, dear, some day when it's convenient, you would give me a cast in

your carriage—I should so like to spend a day with them."

"I will certainly *remember* you, Miss Patty," replied Miss Mayo, with an unequivocal smile. "By the way, Mrs. Layton, you have invitations of course to the Spencers; do you go?"

"Really, I threw the notes aside, and have not thought about it. There will be nothing *distingué* there, I fancy—no especial attraction?"

"No; it will be like other parties: tea-parties are, as Madame de Staël has said, "*une habile invention de la médiocrité pour annuller les facultés de l'esprit.*" But as you sometimes submit to the levelling invention, I wish particularly that you would go to Mrs. Spencer's.

"And why?"

"Because, she has a very accomplished daughter she wishes to bring out."

"Heavens! my dear Miss Mayo, so have fifty other mothers, to whom we should not think of doing such a neighbourly office, as helping out their daughters; but Daisy shall

decide—he is my oracle. How is it, Major Daisy, are those Spencers genteel?"

For once, Major Daisy was at fault. "Really, Mrs. Layton, I cannot say—I am at a loss; but if you, and the ladies will go, I, and some of my friends, will form a phalanx around you; and we can be quite by ourselves, you know."

"Upon my word," said Mr. John Smith, "I think the ladies *does* make a mistake, if they go. My father says, he thinks it's time for *us* to take a stand: he don't think the Spencers *visitable*."

Miss Patty peered over her spectacles at John Smith; and laying her hand on Daisy's arm, she whispered, "Is not that a son of Sam Smith, that drove a hackney-coach, when he first came to New York?"

"Yes—it's natural *he* should be on the alert, you know, Miss Patty, about taking a *stand*?"

Miss Patty did not take the pun; and while Daisy was regretting he had wasted it on her, she continued—for her indignation was touched, where alone it was vulnerable; "*Visitable* indeed! The Spencers visitable?

I wonder if Mr. Spencer's father did not live in Hanover-square, and ride in his coach; (and many a time have I rode up to St. Paul's in it; St. Paul's was then quite out of town;) when this young fellow's mother, Judy Brown that was, used to go out dress-making—the *visitable* people to her, were those that paid her day's wages punctually."

"Well," resumed John Smith, unsuspicious of Miss Patty's vituperation; for he had walked to the window, and was reconnoitring the street, through his eye glass; "Well, if the ladies *persists* in going, I shall attend them; though I have written my note, and sealed it with the mushroom seal, and 'where were you yesterday?' I always use that seal for such sort of people—It's very clever to have *appropriated* seals; is not it, Miss Mayo?"

"Extremely, Mr. Smith,—the mushroom is the *élite* of seals for you."

Mr. Smith could not even guess what *élite* meant; but vanity—blessed interpreter! told him it meant something flattering; and he bowed most gratefully to Miss Mayo.

Mr. Flint had been hitherto silent. Un-

versed in the complicated machinery of gentility, he was too honest, and too good natured, for affectation on the subject; but impatient for the result, he demanded of Miss Clarence, 'what she meant to do about going; for,' he said, 'if she went, he would contrive to get an invitation.'

"Oh!" replied Miss Clarence, who had caught from Miss Mayo some interest in the success of Mrs. Spencer's party, "I shall certainly go, provided"—

"Provided Mrs. Layton goes," said that lady, anticipating Miss Clarence's conclusion; "assuredly, my dear Gertrude, we shall all say 'ditto to Mr. Burke'—shall we not, gentlemen?" The gentlemen smiled, and bowed their assent. "We are quite safe in going—our distinguished selves out of the question, it is quite enough to say of any party 'the Mayos were there:' their presence is fashion. I perceived you were predetermined to sanction Mrs. Spencer, were you not, Miss Mayo?"

"To accept her invitation, I was, Mrs. Layton; and had made Gerald Roscoe promise to accompany me."

"What a triumph! Roscoe has avoided all parties, this winter."

"Yes, Mrs Layton, and does not every man of special cleverness, after a winter or two?—however, I rallied him unmercifully, upon turning recluse in New York, and fancying, on the *pavé* of Broadway, that he was walking in the groves of Academus: whereupon he very graciously said, I reminded him that Plato had placed a statue of Love at the entrance of those groves; and, he added, with his usual gallantry, that he was now perfectly aware, no man could enjoy their seclusion, in peace, till he had rendered homage to the divinity. A pretty compliment to the absolute power of the sex—was it not, Miss Clarence? Bless me! you blush as if it were personal; that blush is prophetic! I shall tell my friend Gerald Roscoe—no protestations; good morning—we shall all meet at the Spencers."

"What a pity!" exclaimed John Smith, as the door closed after her, "that Miss Mayo should be *such* a blue."

"Do you remember, Mr. Smith," asked Mrs. Layton, "the reply of Pitt, to the

King, when he said General Wolfe was mad?"

"No, madam, I can't say I do, in particular."

"'Would to God he would bite some of your majesty's ministers!' It would," continued Mrs. Layton, without regarding the smile of inanity with which Smith received the witticism, 'it would be an infinite relief to the insipidity of fashionable society, if the persons who constitute it were generally infected with Miss Mayo's zeal for mental accomplishments; but then, one does so shrink from the danger of being called a blue, when one sees, as in Miss Mayo's case, that even youth, beauty, and fashion, cannot save one from the odious appellation.

"As the appellation only suits pretenders," said Miss Clarence, "and is for the most part only bestowed by spiteful ignorance, I cannot imagine that it should require much courage, even in a fashionable young lady, to emulate Miss Mayo's example, and devote her leisure hours to those pursuits that enrich the mind, and extend a woman's civil

existence beyond the short reign of youth and beauty."

"Ah, Miss Clarence," said Mr. Morley, "the blues will win the field, if you become their champion."

"Lord!" said John Smith to Major Daisy, in a sort of parenthetical whisper, "is Miss Clarence a blue?—I never heard her talk about books."

Major Daisy could not reply, for he was listening to find out.

"If I were fit to be a champion, Mr. Morley," replied Miss Clarence, modestly, "I would lay the phantom army of blues that is conjured up to terrify young ladies from their books, and repel very ignorant and *very* young gentlemen from all cultivated young women."

"There!" whispered Mr. Smith, with infinite satisfaction, "I knew she was not a blue!" Daisy was silent, a little doubtful and fearful. Flint, who had an innate and homebred reverence for whatever was intellectual and cultivated, rubbed his hands in expressive ecstacy; Mr. Morley thought, in the quiet recess of his soul, that it would be

a great advantage to have such an intelligent person as Miss Clarence to conduct the education of his daughters; and all took their leave, satisfied that Miss Clarence had a right to be, and could afford to be—even a blue, if she pleased.

All had now departed—even Pedrillo, who had lingered through the whole morning, to enjoy the despotic pleasure of manifesting his right to monopolize Emilie. Her languid and abstracted manner indicated, and made him feel to his heart's core, that whatever external observance she might render, he could never bind or touch her affections—their ethereal essence was beyond his, or even her control.

"Thank Heaven!" exclaimed Mrs. Layton, as the door closed on the last visitor, "we are released at last. What is so tiresome, Gertrude, as morning visits?"

"A common-place from your lips, Mrs. Layton!"

"Yes, it is common-place—every body detests them; and yet what is one to do? We must not undertake to be wiser than our generation. It is Molière, is it not, who

says there is no folly equal to that of attempting to reform the world?

> 'C'est une folie à nulle autre seconde,
> 'De vouloir se mêler de corriger le monde.'"

"Molière is perhaps right, Mrs. Layton; and it may be presumptuous, as well as foolish, to crusade against the follies of others; but it seems, to me at least, an equal folly in ourselves, to conform to a custom which you confess to be 'tiresome,' and which is certainly wrong."

"Tiresome, I grant you, but how wrong?"

"Obviously because it consumes the best hours of the day, and coerces, by the tyranny of custom, those who have it in their power to select their own occupations."

"*Miséricorde!* Gertrude, you are sometimes a little *new*. Do you really imagine that these trumpery women who constitute the majority of morning visitors, could be induced to make any rational use of time? Time, my dear child, is like those coins that have no intrinsic worth, but are valued according to the impress put upon them."

Gertrude had too clear a head to be con-

founded by a simile. "Then certainly," she replied, "it should not pass without any impression. But do not think me so very *new*, Mrs. Layton: I would only ask that you, and those who can think like you, would abandon a custom which you confess to be *ennuyant* to these who really like it, and may therefore support it without your glaring inconsistency."

"This is all very sage and very virtuous, Gertrude; but really, my dear friend, when you know a little more of the world as it is, you will relinquish the beau-ideal of the world as it should be. I have quite too humble an opinion of myself, to aspire to turn the current of society from its well-worn channels. I might, as you suggest, institute a sort of hermitage in the midst of the world; but what is an individual separated from the mass—an insignificant drop of water from the great ocean?"

Gertrude smiled at the ridiculous light in which Mrs. Layton had placed her suggestion; and she smiled, and sighed too, as she (assenting to it) mentally repeated Molière's couplet. "My dear Gertrude, is that sigh

heaved for your poor friend, or for the wicked world at large? In either case it is not wasted, for we have both enough of sins and sorrows to sigh over. But you are in too melancholy a vein to-day—you are not well. *A propos*, you were really faint this morning?"

"Slightly so for a moment."

"And so you 'moralized the spectacle'—Ah, well, that is natural. To tell you the honest truth, you and Emilie both look like nuns just from a cloister—your imagination filled with death-heads. Let me send for a carriage. It is but two o'clock—you can ride for a couple of hours, before it is time to dress for dinner."

The young ladies assented, glad of an opportunity of being together, without the fear of interruption.

CHAPTER V.

"C'est trop d'être coquette et dévote—une femme devrait opter."—LA BRUYÈRE.

EMILIE'S spirits were stimulated by the recent information of Marion's good fortune; and as soon as the two friends were fairly in the carriage, and away from the door, she said, "Is not this delightful news of Marion? Of course it's nothing to me—it can be nothing; but it would be very strange if I did not feel it."

"*Very* strange, Emilie."

"You smile, Gertrude, and well you may, for it is very odd that any thing can make me happy, even for a moment; but I feel

this morning as if, in spite of fate, there were some good in store for me."

Gertrude, far from repressing, cherished and strengthened the happy presentiments of Emilie's innocent mind. And she had a right to do so, for hers was not the common, easy, and half-selfish sympathy with happiness. She was conscious of a plan, and a determined resolution, if possible, to extricate her friend from her unhappy engagement, and being perhaps unwarrantably sanguine in her hope of success, she felt as if Emilie's elation were a premonition of coming happiness. Alas! how often are wishes mistaken for premonitions! How often the destructive storm is gathering, when the skies are brightest and clearest to mortal vision!

"Emilie," said Gertrude, "is not Marion, now that he has it in his power to secure to you independence, is he not bound as a true knight—a true love, to ascertain how far you consider your obligations to Pedrillo sacred?

"He has had no opportunity to do so—

perhaps, Gertrude, you do not think Randolph still cares for me?"

"I believe he does—I do not see how any one can help caring for you—loving you tenderly, Emilie; but I want his assurance, in case—"

"In case of what?—do speak, Gertrude."

"Perhaps I have already spoken too much. In case we need his co-operation. Now, Emilie, you must not, positively, ask me any thing further."

"I will not, dear Gertrude—I will obey you in every thing. It *is* very strange that Randolph has not made an effort to see me—that he has not written to me, if he could not see me; yet, I am sure all is right with him. How could he have any hope, when he knows I am to be married, and so soon, to Mr. Pedrillo—how can there possibly," she added, relapsing into her tone of despondency—"how can there possibly be any hope?"

"Oh Emilie, 'if he dare not hope, he does not love;' but here we are coming to the place where I saw the beautiful engraving I promised your mother." She ordered

the coachman to stop. The ladies alighted, and entered a fashionable bookstore, to which was attached a show-room for paintings, prints, and other productions of the arts. A gentleman was standing at the counter, tossing over some books; his attention was attracted by their entrance; he turned his face towards them, and instantly it brightened with the pleasure of recognition, and was answered by, at least, an equal animation from Emilie's eyes. It was Marion. He advanced to them. "My dear Miss Clarence," he whispered to Gertrude, "allow me five minutes conversation with Miss Layton."

"There are some new songs, Emilie," said Gertrude, adroitly favoring the request; "you may look them over, while I am selecting the prints;" and, passing into the inner room, she endeavored to monopolize the attention of the only clerk in waiting. Her effort was successful—he was too much engrossed with his ready sales to his liberal customer, to listen to the low energetic tones of Marion, or to Emilie's soft tremulous replies. The words escaped Gertrude's

ear, but the murmuring sounds were as intelligible as the most expressive notes of a tender song. 'Their loves must not be thwarted,' she thought, as she wiped the gathering tears from her eyes; 'they shall have all my efforts—all my thoughts!' Ah, Gertrude, why that sudden flush? why is that eye so suddenly turned, cast down, and raised again? and where are those thoughts that were to be *all* given to the loves of your friends?

The shop-door had again been opened, and Gertrude, dreading some impertinent interruption, had turned her eye fearfully to Emilie. She encountered Roscoe's sparkling glance. She was abashed and agitated; she longed, yet dreaded to know, whether he had seen her at Mrs. Layton's; she feared to learn from his words, or looks, that he suspected the secret reason of her mystery, and she hoped to pass it off as her sportive concurrence with accident. These, and other thoughts, too rapid and disjointed to be defined, flashed, like meteors, athwart her mind, and communicated embarrassment to her face and manner, while Roscoe was

advancing towards her. Fortunately, all embarrassment is not awkward. There is a charm in the timid eye, the varying cheek, the softness and sensibility of the faltering voice, that the self-possession, the 'loveless wisdom' of maidenly pride, may disdain, but can never equal.

Gertrude had never appeared so interesting to Roscoe as at this moment. And why? Nothing could seem less affecting, than their present *uncircumstanced* encounter in a print-shop. All their other meetings had occurred when her feelings were strongly excited; but the exciting cause was obviously independent of him. He now perceived — no, not perceived, but hoped— faintly hoped, it may be, for he had not a particle of coxcombry, but he did distinctly hope that her too visible emotion proceeded from a sentiment responding to that which had most insidiously interwoven itself in his affections and anticipations. True love, even when far more assured than Roscoe's, is always unpresuming, and never had he addressed her in so reserved and deferential a manner, as at this moment. 'He certain-

ly knows me'—thought she—'it is just as I expected—what an utter change!' But Roscoe had not seen her at Mrs. Layton's—had not yet identified the lady of his thoughts with the shunned heiress—the elect of his heart, nameless and unknown, with the daughter of his benefactor and friend. Of this she was assured, by his quickly resuming his customary frank and easy tone.

"To whom shall I make out the bill, Miss?" asked the shop-boy, who, since Roscoe had withdrawn his customer's attention, had lost all hope of swelling its amount. Gertrude was at the moment listening to a criticism of Roscoe, on a fine engraving of Guido's Sybil, and looking him full in the face. He smiled at the interrogatory, and so archly, that in spite of her tremulous fears, she smiled in return. "Poor, simple youth!" said Roscoe in a low voice, "if he gets a satisfactory answer to that question, we will set him to find out the man in the iron mask, or the author of Junius' Letters."

"I did not hear the name, Miss," said the clerk, confounded by the murmur of

Roscoe's voice, and uncertain whether the lady had replied.

"You need not trouble yourself to make out a bill," replied Gertrude; "just give me the amount."

"Admirable!" exclaimed Roscoe; "so natural, and easy, and successful a reply!"

"At this stage of our acquaintance," replied Gertrude, in the same tone of raillery in which he had spoken, "I am too much pleased with the success of my riddle, voluntarily to tell it; and I assure you I shall tax my ingenuity to co-operate with kind chance. I confess I am a little surprised that your sagacity has not sooner outwitted both."

"My sagacity? The solution would truly have been the achievement of pure sagacity, since chance is as obedient to your wishes as the 'dainty spirits' of Prospero to his; and you know it is 'in the bond' that I ask no questions."

Gertrude hesitated for a moment in her reply. She began to be herself impatient of the mystery—to feel it to be onerous, and to fear that it was silly. "I withdraw that

condition," she said; "if we meet again, I permit you to ask what questions you please—but not now," she added, shrinking from the awkward moment of disclosure.

Roscoe bowed, and expressed his thanks, with a little faltering, and a great deal of animation, and concluded by saying, "if the fortunate moment ever comes, of a satisfactory reply to my *questions*, do not be offended if I am as extravagant in my demonstrations of joy, as Archimedes was when he rushed from the bath, exclaiming, "I've found it—I've found it."

Gertrude received certain intimations from her throbbing heart, that they were dwelling too long on a too interesting topic, and she rather abruptly turned the conversation to some new prints lying on the counter. The attentive clerk was induced, by the expression of her admiration, to display the treasures of his shop. He produced a collection of rare coins and medals, imported for one of the few antiquaries of our country, and a fine set of impressions of Canova's *chefs-d'œuvre*. Here were fertile themes of conversation, and Roscoe, for the first time,

had an opportunity of eliciting the various knowledge with which Gertrude's mind was enriched. In examining the medals, references to history were unavoidable. Without haranguing like a magnificent Corinne, she gracefully recurred to traits of character, and such circumstances illustrative of those traits as were impressed on her clear and accurate memory. In looking over the prints, her susceptible imagination, alive to all the forms and combinations of beauty, her cultivated taste and nice observation were manifested spontaneously, without effort, and without constraint; and Roscoe enjoyed the rare pleasure that results from congeniality of taste, and similarity of culture. His own mind was enriched with those elegant acquisitions, that are regarded for a professional man in our 'working-day world,' rather embellishments than necessaries. But are they so? And when the 'working-day' is past, and affluence and leisure attained, are there not many who ruefully exclaim, with Sir Andrew Aguecheek, 'Oh, that I had followed the arts!'

Never were *têtes-à-tête* less likely to be

voluntarily broken off, than those of the parties in the bookseller's shop. Gertrude was, however, aware of the propriety of withdrawing, and she looked anxiously at Emilie, who was still bending over the music with Marion, as if they were conning a lesson together. Roscoe's eyes followed the direction of Miss Clarence's. "Are those persons known to you?" he asked.

"Yes, the lady is my companion," replied Gertrude, secretly rejoicing that Emilie was so concealed by the large cloak and hood in which she was muffled, that Roscoe had not recognised her; "I must remind her that it is quite time for us to go."

"Oh, no—do not; the common instincts of humanity should protect a conversation so interesting as that from interruption; and besides," he added, his ready ingenuity hitting on this device to prolong their interview, "I was just going to have the boldness to ask you to accompany me to the Methodist chapel in John-street. I do not wonder that you smile at the singular proposition—you, perhaps, have not heard Mr. Summerfield?"

"No, but I have heard much of him as a most eloquent preacher."

"And wish to hear him, do you not? All ladies follow after eloquent preachers; even my mother, the most regular church-going woman in the bishop's diocess—the most rational of women, has gone with the crowd to-day; and it will not lessen my unbounded respect for one other of the sex, if she too joins the multitude. You can return in a short time, and it may be, strange as it may seem, that your friend will not miss you."

Gertrude was really anxious to hear the celebrated preacher in question, and was probably more influenced than she was herself aware of by the desire to remain near to Roscoe; and going up to Emilie, she whispered, cautioned her not to prolong her stay imprudently, said she had a little farther to go, and that she would leave the carriage for her, and walk home herself. Emilie readily assented to any arrangement to protract a pleasure that might never be repeated, and Gertrude and Roscoe proceeded to the chapel, which they found filled to overflowing. Pews, aisles, windows, the

porch-steps, were crowded; and even the outer persons of this immense concourse were in that hushed and listening attitude, that shows what a potent spell one mind can cast over thousands.

There is a certain deference of boasted equality, and on the level arena of a church, even in our country, paid to the superiority of personal appearance. One and another gave way a little, a very little, at Roscoe's approach; so that, after a few moments of patient perseverance, Gertrude found herself at the entrance of the middle aisle. The first face she recognised, the first eye she encountered, were those of our *ubiquitous* friend Flint. He nodded familiarly to her. Being himself ensconced at the upper end of a pew, and hemmed in by a file of ladies, he could not offer his seat; he, however, contrived to signify to one of the volunteer masters of ceremonies, that there was a vacant seat in a distant pew, to which the lady, to whom he directed his attention, might be conducted. The man offered his services, and Gertrude accepted, simply from the consciousness, that the precise place she

occupied was, just at that moment, the most attractive in the world; and Roscoe saw her conducted away from him with the same sort of vexed disappointment with which a lover wakes from his dreams, at the moment when, after infinite pains, he has secured proximity to his mistress.

The preacher was young, handsome, and graceful; with a delicious voice, skilfully modulated, and expressive of the tenderness of a seraphic spirit. He presented the most appalling truths to his hearers, and enforced them by an address to their strongest passions—love and fear. His youth might have seemed to want authority to set forth the terrors of the law, had not his emaciated figure, and hectic cheek, indicated that his spirit was on the verge of the unseen world, and fulfilling a celestial commission, and a last duty.

It was not because Gertrude's religious sentiments did not precisely accord with the preacher's, that he failed to interest her. She was not one of those cold and conceited listeners who criticise when they should feel. Her affections could warm at an-

other's altar, though the fire there was not kindled by the same process that had lighted the sacred flame on her own; and, finally, if she was not moved by the popular preacher, it was not from the remotest similarity to the old woman who could only cry in her own parish. If, as Dr. Franklin relates, a poor octogenarian who had been immured for years in her own apartment, employed a confessor to shrive her "vain thoughts," our heroine, just in the uncertain budding-time of her sweet hopes, must be forgiven for her truant fancies.

But if she was unmoved, there was a lady at her side almost convulsed by the picture of the final retribution which the preacher presented. She was cloaked and veiled, and kept her head reclining on the front of the pew. Her tears fell like rain-drops into her lap. Gertrude suspected she knew her. 'Can it be!' she thought—she kept her eye stedfastly fixed on her. Her curiosity, and a better feeling than curiosity, was awakened. The lady drew off her glove. If Gertrude had been at a loss to recognise the beautiful hand thus exposed, she could not mistake

the rich and rare rings that identified Mrs. Layton's.

Gertrude's first impulse was to press that hand in hers, in token of her sympathy with the gracious feelings awakened; but she was checked by the studious concealment of Mrs. Layton's attitude, and by the fear that the consciousness of her observation might check the tide of religious thought, which, she hoped, like a swollen torrent, would sweep away accumulated rubbish, and leave a fertilized and productive soil. But Gertrude's benevolent hope had a frail foundation.

The agitation of Mrs. Layton's mind was not the healthful strife of the elements, that leaves a purified atmosphere, but the storm of a tropical region, that marks its track by waste and desolation. Her religion, (if it be not sacrilege so to apply that sacred name,) was a transient emotion—a passing fervor—a gust of passion, which, if it did not lull the cravings of her immortal nature, or still the reproaches of conscience, for a time, at least, overwhelmed them.

Gertrude, in the simplicity of her heart,

believed a moral renovation was begun, and already, with the sanguine expectation of youth, was counting on its natural fruits, in the mother's zealous co-operation in her daughter's cause, when she was awakened from her reverie by the close of the service. She eagerly hastened forward to escape Mrs. Layton's notice, and was soon lost in the crowd, from which she disengaged herself and reached home, without again encountering Roscoe, who was lingering and looking for her.

She found Emilie at home, impatiently awaiting her; her cheek was flushed, and her face was radiant. Her air, her step, her voice, her whole being, seemed changed. The inevitable duties of the toilet were to be performed preparatorily to dinner, and the time of grace was short; but, short as it was, Emilie found opportunity to communicate the substance of her interview with Marion. He still loved her truly, devotedly. "And it was from a letter of yours to his sister, Gertrude, which he says, she had not the heart to keep from him, that he learned the true state of the case, that I had never trifled with his

feelings, that I was forced into this odious engagement, and that you believed I loved him—you should not have told that, Gertrude; however, it is past, and can't be helped now—and that I should be miserable with Pedrillo—*that* I'm sure you might say to any body. Randolph came post to New York, and had not been a half hour in the city, when he accidentally heard we were all at the Athenæum: thither he went to meet us. He has since repeatedly called, and never been admitted—he has written to me, and his letters have been enclosed to him, un-opened."

"I have conjectured all this before, Emilie; but what is to come of this interview?"

"Oh! Heaven knows—dear Gertrude; bless you—bless you for writing that letter."

What was to come of it, in Emilie's hope, was plain enough from her benediction. Gertrude shook her head, and said, with a gravity half-real, half-affected, "I was afraid I was at the bottom of this mischief, but I have done what I could to repair it."

"Oh Gertrude!" exclaimed Emilie, mistaking her friend's meaning, "then you told

mamma?—you advised her to return the letters?"

"Emilie!"

"Emilie did not quite comprehend the tone of Gertrude's exclamation. "I am not offended," she said—"I cannot be offended with you. I dare say you thought it was right, or you would not have done it; and as you never were in love, dear Gertrude, you know, you cannot possibly tell what a trial it is."

Gertrude, not thinking an *éclaircissement* at this moment very important, proceeded to ask Emilie if Marion had proposed any thing?"

"Yes, he has he intreats me——but perhaps, Gertrude, you will think it your duty to tell mamma?"

"Nothing you trust me with, Emilie."

"Oh, do not think I doubt you. It is only when I am not quite sure we think exactly alike about what is right; and I judge from my feelings, you know, and therefore, I am very liable to go wrong."

"Never—never Emilie, while they remain so pure and unperverted; but tell me what

did Marion propose?—an elopement, a clandestine marriage?"

"Yes."

"I am glad of it."

"Emilie threw her arms around Gertrude's neck: "are you, Gertrude?—do *you* think it is right?—do *you* think I may consent?"

Gertrude looked in her eager face with a smile, and replied playfully in the words of the Scotch song:

> "Come counsel, dear Tittie, don't tarry,
> I'll gie you my bonnie black hen,
> Gif ye will advise me to marry
> The lad I lo'e dearly"——

"Dear Emilie, that advice may yet come from my lips, as it springs from my heart at this moment. But a clandestine marriage must be the last resort. We must first see whether your father will not release you from the engagement he has made with Pedrillo."

"He never will—never, Gertrude."

"We will see—and if he will not, why then ——but here is Justine, to tell us the carriage is waiting. Keep up your spirits,

Emilie, and, according to the good old-fashioned rule, 'hope for the best, and be prepared for the worst'—the worst shall not come to you, if human effort can avert it."

Mrs. Layton and Pedrillo were awaiting the young ladies in the parlor. Mrs. Layton showed no traces of the morning's emotions excepting an unusual languor, and a deeper tinge of rouge than usual. Emilie never had appeared more dazzlingly beautiful. Pedrillo seized her hand with rapture; "God bless me! Miss Emilie," he said, "your ride has wrought miracles. No rose was ever brighter and fresher than the color on your cheek. Miss Layton," he added in a lower voice, "this week is to fulfil my hopes."

"This week!" she echoed, and her boasted color faded to the faintest hue. Nothing farther passed. He handed her to the carriage, and she was compelled to endure, with an aching, and anxious heart, for the remainder of the evening, the stately ceremonies of a formal dinner-party.

CHAPTER VI.

"I had rather be married to a death's head, with a bone in his mouth, than to either of these. God defend me from these!"—MERCHANT OF VENICE.

THE Penates seldom smile on the breakfast-meal in the happiest families; and where no sacrifices are made to the domestic deities, it is a gloomy gathering enough. On the morning succeeding the dinner-party—dates begin to assume an importance as we draw to the close of our history—Mr. Layton was in his murkiest humor. He did not even, as usual, vent his ill-temper on the poor servant in waiting—the common safety-valve of effervescing humors. The cold coffee, the heavy cakes, the missing butter-knife, all were unnoticed. Twice he rose, and it seemed unconsciously, from the

breakfast-table — strode up and down the room—paused behind Emilie's chair—patted her head—then turned abruptly away to hide a starting tear—seized the morning paper, sat down by the window, and affected to be reading it. Emilie, whose agitated spirits were ready to take alarm, thought her father's manner portended evil to her; and when he said, "My child, your mother wishes to speak with you as soon as you have finished your breakfast," she turned pale, rose from her untasted coffee, and left the room. Gertrude would have followed, but Mr. Layton arrested her by a request that she would allow him to speak with her in the library.

Layton's affairs with Pedrillo had come to a fearful crisis. Pedrillo had been excessively irritated by being for ten days denied all access to Emilie; and on the preceding morning, (of which we have given the details), he had been exasperated by her manifest aversion to him, and by the emotion she had betrayed at the mention of Marion. He was farther outraged by some well-meant attempts of Flint to be witty on the

precariousness of love affairs; and these little irritations swelled the measure of his impatience, already full, to overflowing. When he met Layton, the passion that had been curbed by the restraints of good-breeding, was expressed without qualification. He insisted on the immediate performance of Layton's contract, and threatened, in case of any further delay, the enforcement of his pecuniary claims, and, what Layton dreaded far more, the disclosure of the fraud he had practised at the gaming-table. Layton was desperate, and promised whatever Pedrillo required.

"Miss Clarence, said Layton, when he had closed the library door, and after two or three embarrassing hems! "Miss Clarence, I find it excessively awkward to make a request of you, which always comes with a bad grace from a gentleman to a lady, and from me to my guest may appear particularly indelicate. However, I am perfectly aware such fastidiousness is out of place in relation to you, and though I am really oppressed and mortified by the necessity of asking"——

"I beg, Mr. Layton," replied Gertrude, compassionating his embarrassment, "that you will consider my being your guest merely as a circumstance that gives me a facility in serving you."

"You are very good, Miss Clarence, very kind; but it is so difficult to explain to a lady the little pecuniary embarrassments to which gentlemen are liable, that it is humiliating to confess them. However, your goodness overcomes my scruples; and frankly, my dear Miss Clarence, I am in pressing want of a thousand dollars. Can you oblige me by advancing them?"

Gertrude hesitated for a moment; but her plans and resolutions were formed, and not to be lightly shaken. "I am awaiting, Mr. Layton," she replied, "a letter from my father, which will contain some instructions in relation to my pecuniary concerns, and, till I hear from him, I cannot dispose of so large a sum."

"But, my dear madam—my dear Miss Clarence, you misunderstand me—dispose! bless me!—I ask only the loan for a very few days."

"So I understand, Mr. Layton."

"And you refuse!—I confess I did not anticipate this; a thousand dollars are a small item of your splendid fortune, Miss Clarence. Would to God I had been endowed with one particle of your admirable prudence!" Though Layton did not quite lose his customary good-breeding, he spoke in a tone of bitter sarcasm that wounded Gertrude to the heart, for she utterly disdained every sordid consideration. She was not, however, betrayed into any apparent relenting, and he proceeded: "I was perfectly aware that I had no claims, Miss Clarence, but I imagined you might be willing to risk a small sacrifice for the husband and father of friends whom you profess to love."

"I am perfectly aware of all the motives that exist for granting your request, Mr. Layton, and I resist them in very difficult compliance with what I believe to be my duty."

"Duty!—a harsh ungraceful word on a young lady's lips, Miss Clarence. But I am detaining you—I certainly have no in-

tention of appealing to the feelings of a lady who has so stern a sense of *duty*." Layton spoke with unaffected scorn. Nothing could appear more unlovely in his eyes, more unfeminine, and, as he said, ungraceful in a lady, than consideration in money affairs. He mentally accused Gertrude of parsimony, of miserliness, of utter insensibility to the soft charities of life; but the current of his feelings was changed, when, a moment after, the door was thrown open, and Emilie rushed in and threw herself at his feet, exclaiming passionately, "Oh, my dear father, pity me!—have mercy on me!"

Her customary manner was so quiet and gentle, that there was something frightful in this turbulent emotion. Gertrude sprang towards her—"My dear Emilie," she said, "what does this mean?"

There seemed to be a spell in Gertrude's voice; Emilie was hushed for a moment—she turned her eyes to her friend with the most intense supplication, and then again bursting into heart-piercing cries, she said, "No, no—you cannot help me. Oh, my father, my dear father, if you ever loved me,

even when I was a little child—if you once wished to make me happy, do not now abandon me to utter misery! Gertrude—this very week—oh, I shall go wild. My dear father, pity me!—Gertrude, beg for me."

Gertrude burst into tears. "For God's sake, Mr. Layton," she cried, "save your child from this cruel fate!"

"Do *you* feel!" he exclaimed, gazing at Gertrude, as if he were surprised at her emotion—"do *you* feel? Then even the stones cry out against me"—and, giving way to a burst of uncontrollable feeling, he raised Emilie and pressed her to his bosom. "Pity *me*—pity me, my child; I am miserable, condemned, wretched, lost. Speak the word, Emilie—say I shall dissolve this engagement with Pedrillo, and I will—I will go to prison. We will all sink together into this abyss of ruin and misery. Speak, Emilie, and it shall be so."

Emilie was terrified by her father's passionate emotion, and she gathered strength at the first thought of a generous motive for her sacrifice. "Oh, no, no," she replied,

"let it be I alone, if there must be a victim—I have expected it—I can bear it." She dropped her head on her father's shoulder.

'Can I,' thought Gertrude, 'look passively on this distressful conflict? why have I not heard from my father?—why should I wait to hear?—he would not be less willing to interpose than I am—I will speak to the wretched man—I will try;' and she was on the point of giving utterance to her purpose, when a servant appeared at the open door with a packet of letters. Her eye ran hastily over the superscriptions. One was from her father. She broke the seal and glanced at its contents, and then, turning to Emilie, she threw her arms about her, and said with a look of ineffable joy, "Now, Emilie, I can redeem my promise to you." Emilie looked up bewildered; a faint light dawned on her mind, but it was a light struggling through darkness. There was a strange sickly fluttering about her heart, like that felt by the sufferer who had resigned himself to the executioner, when his uncertain sense first catches the cry of pardon.

" I thought you had withdrawn, Miss Clarence," said Mr. Layton, with evident confusion and undisguised displeasure, " I am not aware that your residence under my roof invests you with a right to witness our most private affairs."

Gertrude did not condescend to notice this offensive speech. She replied with a little faltering, for she found it difficult to embody in words her long-meditated project, " Mr. Layton, my position in your family has given me a knowledge of your affairs, unsought-for and most painful."

" Such assurances are superfluous, madam."

" No, not superfluous," she continued, with unabated gentleness, " for the knowledge that Emilie's happiness was in jeopardy has inspired me with the hope to serve her."

" By advice and remonstrance, no doubt —the selfish and cold-hearted are ever lavish of such services."

" I waited only for a letter from my father," she proceeded, without seeming to hear him; " it has come, and is what I

expected. Mr. Layton, I must be more explicit than you may think becomes me. This is no time to make sacrifices to fastidiousness—Emilie, allow me to speak alone with your father." She kissed Emilie tenderly as she turned to withdraw, and whispered, "take heart of grace, my blessed—all must yet be well."

Mr. Layton gazed at Gertrude with an impatient expectation of remonstrance, but she spoke in a voice and with a look like an angel's extending celestial aid to a mortal lost in a labyrinth. "Mr. Layton," she said, "there is no time, and this is no occasion for distrusts on your part, or delays on mine. I have come to the knowledge, no matter how, that you are involved in pecuniary obligations to Mr. Pedrillo. May not the cancelling of these obligations save Emilie from this marriage?"

"What right have you, Miss Clarence, to ask this question? and how, in God's name, am I to cancel any pecuniary obligations?"

"My right," she replied, "is indisputable, for it rests on my affection for

Emilie, and my hope to save you from an eternal sorrow by satisfying Pedrillo's claims.

"Poor dreaming girl!" exclaimed Layton, half incredulous and half contemptuous, "you talk of satisfying Pedrillo's claims, when your generosity could not stretch to the hazard of one poor thousand dollars."

"No," returned Gertrude, with a smile, "we money-dealers, Mr. Layton, are all calculators—we require an equivalent for our money. Emilie's redemption from this deep misery is worth to me any sacrifice I can make. Her emancipation from this engagement is the equivalent I demand, the only return I wish. No, this is not all; you must promise me not only her freedom, but that she shall be at liberty to give her hand to Randolph Marion, on whom she has already worthily bestowed her heart. If you accede to my terms, you will furnish me with a statement of the amount of Pedrillo's claims."

"Good Heaven!—are you in earnest—have you deliberated?—your father, Miss Clarence?"

" I have already told you that I have only waited for his sanction. Read, if you please, what he says on the subject."

Layton ran his eye hastily over a few paragraphs of the letter, and, trembling with new emotions, he exclaimed, " Oh, he has not—you have not dreamt of the hideous amount of my debt to that villain."

" We do not know it, but we should not shrink from any amount within the compass of our fortune. Be more calm, Mr. Layton —take this pencil and give me in writing the sum due."

" Look over me, then," he said, seizing a sheet of paper, " look over me, and arrest my hand when the sum exceeds your intentions. He then recalled and recorded the debts contracted from time to time. He stopped suddenly—" These are thousands, not hundreds, Miss Clarence."

" I understand perfectly"—replied Gertrude, " go on."

He proceeded, till running, up the different specifications, he set down the sum total, " Sixty thousand dollars !" He said,

"You see now, Miss Clarence, how deep, how hopeless, is my ruin."

"Hopeless! do you still doubt that I am in earnest, Mr. Layton?"

"But you cannot design—Miss Clarence, I will not deceive you. I can by no possibility repay any portion of this debt."

"You forget that I have made my own terms, Mr. Layton. Assure me that Emilie is at liberty to indulge the honorable inclinations of her heart, and I will at once convey to you the amount of property you have mentioned."

Layton did not reply—he could not. He was almost frantic with conflicting emotions; a manly shame, that he had underrated and insulted a woman capable of such generosity and forbearance—a thrilling joy at the thought of escaping from thraldom, checked by the stinging consciousness that he remained Pedrillo's slave, while the secret of his dishonor was in his keeping. He pressed his hands to his throbbing temples—he paced the room, and replied only by incoherent ejaculations to Gertrude's entrea-

ties, which were urged as if she were suing for her own happiness.

There is a salutary principle in the atmosphere of virtue—a quickening influence in a noble action—an inspiration caught from powerful goodness. 'Will Gertrude Clarence do this for her *friend*,' he thought; 'and shall not I run a risk—sacrifice myself, if it must be, for my *child?* It is but the name of honor that I have to lose!

'But was it not possible to break with Pedrillo, and still preserve that name?—Pedrillo might make the long-dreaded disclosure, but he had *no proof;* and would the word of a disappointed man, a revengeful Spaniard, be credited?' Layton felt assured it would not; and without waiting to deliberate further, he poured out his honest thanks to Gertrude, and received the papers that placed at his disposal the price of Emilie's liberty.

Thus authorized to tell Emilie that she was mistress of her own destiny, Gertrude flew to her friend, her face radiant with the happiness she was to communicate. Banish-

ed spirits restored to Paradise could not have been more blissful than the two friends; Emilie receiving more than life and liberty, a release from the cruellest enthralment, and at her hands, whose favours had the unction of celestial mercy; and not release only, but the assurance that her affections might now expand in the natural atmosphere of a pure, requited, and acknowledged love.

Delicious as Emilie's sensations were, Gertrude's was even a more elevated joy, for

> 'If there is a feeling to mortals given,
> That has less of earth in it than Heaven,'

it is that quiet inward joy, that springs from the consciousness of benevolent and successful efforts for others; of efforts to which one is not impelled by any authorised claim, which the world does not demand, nor reward, nor can ever know—which can have no motive nor result in self. A perfectly disinterested action is a demonstration to the spirit of its alliance and communion with the divine nature—an entrance into the joy of its Lord.

Not a shadow dimmed their present sunshine—not one presaging thought of coming evil—not one transient presentiment of the fatal consequences of that hour's decisions.

As soon as their spirits were sufficiently tranquillized, Emilie sat down to write a note to Marion, and Gertrude to read her letters. Those shorter, and of less consequence than her father's, we shall first present; and our readers will confess, they were of a nature to bring down our heroine's feelings to the level of *very* common life.

"*To Miss Clarence.*

"Respected lady: 'If a man would
"thrive, he should wive,' therefore, as
"agent, and acting for my son, (John
"Smith,) I have the satisfaction of propos-
"ing an alliance (matrimonial) between you
"and him, (that is, my son.) He is a
"remarkable genteel young man in a draw-
"ing-room, (John is)—quite up to any
"thing, but as that is where you have seen
"him, (chiefly,) I shall say no more about

" it, only observing that my son (John) " always goes for the first, (he can afford " it,) i. e. Wheeler's coats—Whitmarsh's " pantaloons—Byrne's boots—&c. &c.— " which is, (I take it,) the reason he has " made you, valued lady, his chòice; you " being the first match in the city (at pre- " sent). John (my son) has been a healthy " lad from the egg, and cleanly, (his mo- " ther says,) thorough cleanly. A touch of " the intermittent, that he is taken down " with, (this evening,) makes nothing against " it (i. e. against his constitution). As I " have found procrastination (in all kinds of " business) a bad thing, and to strike while " the iron's hot a safe rule (without excep- " tions), and as the doctor says my son " (John) may be down for a week, I con- " cluded (knowing his mind) not to delay, " for fear of accidents. As I have not writ " a love-letter since I married my wife, I " hope you will, ma'am, excuse all mistakes " and deficiencies. As soon as I receive a " punctual answer, (to the above,) we will " arrange all matters of business, (there I'm

"at home,) to your, and your honoured
"father's wishes. (Errors excepted,) your
"obedient servant to command, ma'am,

"SAM'L SMITH."

Gertrude read Mr. Smith's letter, and threw it into the fire; but, before it was consumed, she snatched it out, and preserved it as a happy illustration of the flattering honours to which an heiress may be doomed. The following brief reply ended this correspondence:—

"Miss Clarence presents her compliments
"to Mr. Samuel Smith. She is very happy
"to hear that his son—Mr. John Smith—
"has a good constitution, and laudable
"habits, but must decline the honour of
"deriving any advantage from them."

The succeeding epistle was from Mr. *D.* Flint:—

"*To Miss Clarence.*

"Dear girl—I hope you will not deem

my address to you at this time premature.
" I assure you the sentiment that prompts
my pen was begun in esteem, and has
" ripened into love. I declare to you, upon
" my honour, Miss Clarence, that I have
" never seen a lady whom my head and
" heart both so wholly approved as yourself;
" and I feel very sure that no change of
" circumstances, or fortune, could ever make
" any difference in my feelings, but that in
" all the vicissitudes of this sublunary scene,
" I should show you every attention which
" man owes to the weaker sex.

" I wish, on all occasions, to be fair and
" above board; and therefore, I deem it my
" duty to accompany this offer of my hand
" with a candid account of my family. My
" father resides in Connecticut. He is an
" independent farmer, and an honest man
" —' the noblest work of God,' Miss Cla-
" rence. He had not, it is true, the ad-
" vantages of education, which he gave to
" me, and which have made my lot so
" distinguished. My mother is a sensible
" and good woman, though rather plain.
" The prophetic verse in the last chapter of

"Proverbs, is, as my father often remarks, "literally fulfilled, 'her children rise up "and call her blessed, her husband also, "and he praiseth.' I promised to be can-"did, and therefore must state to you, that "my eldest brother—the child of a former "marriage, and therefore, only my *half*-"brother—committed a crime when he "was about thirteen, for which he was "obliged to flee the country. It is now "more than twenty years since, and as he "has never been heard from, and as he was, "as I observed above, but my *half*-brother, "I hope you will overlook this stain on our "name, which has been the greatest of "griefs and humiliations to my poor father.

"I am sensible that my parents are not "precisely such persons as compose our "circle in New York; but as they seldom "or never come to town, you will not be "mortified by their being brought into com-"parison with our acquaintance here. It is "right, however, to state that, while they "live, I shall make them an annual visit, "and shall expect of course that Mrs. Flint "will wish to accompany me. May my

" right hand wither, before I fail in any
" act of duty or kindness to my honored
" parents!

" And now, my dear girl, I beg you will
" give a week's consideration to the contents
" of this letter, and then answer it according
" to the dictates of your own good sense.
" May the answer be propitious to the most
" earnest wish of your devoted friend and
" lover,

D. FLINT."

Blunt and *gauche* as our friend Flint was, his coarser qualities were so commingled with simplicity, integrity, and good-heartedness, that our heroine, if she had been compelled to select one from among her professed suitors, would undoubtedly have laid the crown matrimonial on Mr. D. Flint's aspiring brow; but as she was fortunately exempt from so cruel a necessity, she laid the letter aside to be answered as he had requested, at the end of a week, and strictly 'according to the dictates of her good sense.'

The last and most important letter was from Mr. Clarence.

" Marion Hall, Virginia.

" My dear child—I have just received " your last two letters. I trust no evil will " ensue from the delay of the first.

" Poor Seton! His fate has cost me " many tears, but I am deeply thankful for " his dismissal. I know nothing more " distressful than to be condemned to drag " through a long life, with broken health, " a sensitive temper, and that bitter drug, " poverty. His felicity in heaven is, I " doubt not, enhanced by his sufferings on " earth.

" Roscoe's generous kindness to Louis, is " in conformity with my impressions of his " character. I was a little captious in rela- " tion to the Roscoes when I was in New " York, and suffered certain trifling irrita- " tions to influence my feelings improperly, " and I am afraid, my dear Gertrude, that " you have cherished a resentment quite out " of proportion to their offences, and incon- " sistent too with your native gentleness. " How it is possible, my dear child, that " you should have met Roscoe in Louis'

"room, and not have communicated your "name? Suffer me to say, that I think "there was rather more pride than dignity "in this procedure; or was it rustic girlish-"ness, Gertrude? And have you been "making a pretty little romantic mystery "of your name? In either case, my child, "I entreat that you will put an end to it. "I fear that Gerald, when he discovers the "truth, will be—no, not disgusted—the "word is too harsh—but a little *rebuté*."

Gertrude pondered over the above portion of her letter for at least half an hour, before she proceeded; and then she gave rather a listless and undutiful attention to what followed.

"I thank you, my dear Gertrude, for "transmitting to me your impressions, "while they are fresh and unmodified by "experience, of the society in which you "are moving. I am attached to New York "from early habit; it was the scene of the "happiest portion of my life. It is a noble "city—a wide field for every talent—full of "excitement, of facilities for the enter-"prising, stimulants and motives to exer-

"tion, and rewards to industry and ability. "But that its opulence, its accumulating "wealth, its commercial potentiality, its "rapid progress, should be the themes of "the exulting patriot, or the political eco- "nomist, rather than of the sentimental "young lady, does not surprise me. New "York, you say, appears to you like an "oriental fair, 'to which all the nations of "the earth have sent their representatives to "bargain and to bustle.' You are disgusted "with the vacuity, the flippancy, the su- "perficial accomplishments, the idle com- "petitions, the useless and wasteful ex- "penditure, of the society in which you "mingle.

"But there are, my dear Gertrude, and "I fear must be, sins and follies in every "human condition. Ignorance and pre- "tension, the petty jealousies of the rich "of yesterday towards the rich of to-day, "are evils necessarily incident to a state of "society so fluctuating as that of New York. "Where wealth is the only effective aristo- "cracy, the dregs, of course, often rise

" to the surface. But New York has its
" cultivated and refined minds—its happy
" homes — the most elevated objects of
" pursuit — noble institutions — expansive
" charities, and whatever gives dignity and
" effect to life: and have *you* forgotten, Ger-
" trude, that 'unmeet nurse' as it may be
" 'for poetic child,' it is the residence of a
" triumvirate of poets that would illustrate
" any land?

" It is I confess mortifying, that, in our
" country, where we ought

> 'To tread the perfect ways of honor,
> 'And claim by these our greatness,'

" and not by any external or accidental dis-
" tinction—nor by being, in the noble lan-
" guage of Thurlow, 'the accident of an ac-
" cident,' there should be such an artificial
" construction of society—such perpetual
" discussions of relative *genteelness* — so
" much secret envy, and manifest contempt,
" and anxious aspiration after a name and
" place in fashionable society. We deplore
" this; but that it has its source in man's na-

" tural love of distinction, you and I must " conclude, who have so often laughed " over the six distinct ranks in our village of " Clarenceville, so blending into each other, " like the colors of the rainbow, that no com- " mon observer could tell where one ended " and the other began.

" One more criticism on your impressions, " my dear child, and I have done. You have " fallen into a common youthful error. You " have formed your conclusions from indi- " vidual and very limited experience. The " prevailing cast of the society which " Mrs. Layton courts and attracts, is such " as you describe; but you must remember " that the most exalted names in our land " are occasionally found in the ranks of " fashion, and I will not allow any society " to be condemned *en masse*, where such " persons are to be met as Gerald Roscoe, " Emilie Layton, and my Gertrude!

" And this brings me to subjects far more " interesting than any general speculations, " and which I have purposely reserved till " you should have dutifully read through all

"my prosing. I have by me a letter from "Stephen Morley, Esq., announcing the ap- "pointment of my good friend Randolph, "which Morley does not hesitate to ascribe "to his (Morley's) 'desire to oblige Miss C. "and her father.' Thereupon he founds a "claim to a reciprocity of service; and, after "a formal declaration of his admiration of "my daughter, he asks my consent to his "addresses—and my *views as to settlements*. "I have answered him by a simple refer- "ence of the whole affair to your arbitre- "ment.

"You cannot for a moment have doubted "what my reply would be to your first hasty "and eloquent letter. It suffused my eyes "with tears, and made my heart throb with "the most delicious sensations. You seem "to fear that I may deem your pur- "pose rash—a 'disproportioned thought,' "and you tell me it was the inspiration of "the moment. My beloved Gertrude, it "was a noble inspiration, worthy of that "heart that never yet 'affected eminence nor "wealth.' You say, and truly, that 'an un-

" willing marriage is the worst slavery—the " indulgence of strong and innocent affec- " tions beyond all price.' My child, your " purpose has my entire approbation, and " you shall have my thanks for any sacrifices " you may make to extricate Emilie. My " only regret will be, my dear Gertrude, " that you, who have so just an estimate of " property—so fixed and operative a resolu- " tion to devote it to its noblest and most " effective purposes, should transfer it to " the hands of profligates and spendthrifts. " But we must solace ourselves with the re- " flection that Providence has so wisely re- " gulated human affairs, that there is not " so much left to individual discretion as we, " in our vain glory, are apt to imagine. The " money that we often regard as wasted, is put " into rapid circulation, and soon goes to com- " pensate the industry and ingenuity of the " artisan and tradesman. It is sometimes " as consoling to know our own impotence, " as at others to feel our moral power.

" My tenderest love to my sweet little " friend Emilie—my blessing to you, my be- " loved child. God be with you, and

"strengthen every benevolent feeling, and
"virtuous purpose.

"Most affectionately,
"Your father,
"C. Clarence."

"P. S. I beg you, Gertrude, to dismiss "your pique against Gerald Roscoe—you "will oblige me in this—I have been in "fault, but I had no intention of implanting "in your mind a permanent prejudice against "him."

CHAPTER VII.

"We revoke not our purposes so readily."—BRYANT.

WHEN Layton was left in the library by Gertrude, he had before him the necessary and difficult task of communicating to Pedrillo his final decision. The course of safety and true policy in this, as in every case, lay in the path of integrity. If Layton had, with the courage of a manly spirit, resolved not to shrink from the disclosure of his guilt, it is possible he might have averted Pedrillo's vengeance; but, alas! truth and simplicity are the helm and rudder first lost in the wreck of human virtue. Layton wrote half a dozen notes, and finally sealed and sent the following, in which he committed one of

those fatal errors by which men seem so blindly and so often to prepare the net for their own destruction.

" My dear Pedrillo,—It is with infinite " pain that I find myself compelled to an- " nounce to you my daughter's unconquera- " ble aversion to yield to your wishes, and " her father's prayers and commands. It is " in vain to contend longer. I have done " every thing that the warmest friendship " and the deepest and most heartily ac- " knowledged obligations could exact from " me. Her mother too has argued, pleaded, " and remonstrated in vain. But, *console-* " *toi, mon ami*, even Cæsar's fortunes yielded " to fate, and there are others as young and " as fair as my ungrateful girl, who will be " proud to give you both heart and hand. " You are too much of a philosopher to re- " pine because the wind blows north, when " you would have it south—shift your sails, " and make for another port.

" As to our pecuniary relations—Fortune, " the jade, has, thank Heaven, made a " sudden turn in my favour, and I am in

" purse to the full amount of my debts to
" you. We will adjust these affairs by
" letter, or meet for the purpose, when and
" where you please.

" My dear friend, I feel quite confident
" that the menace you threw out as to a
" certain mode of resenting a failure which,
" upon my honour, is no fault of mine, was
" uttered in a moment of *excitement*. You
" are, I am sure, far too generous, too
" honourable to betray a secret to the—
" (here he made the conventional sign for
" the gaming club,) which would ruin me,
" without doing you the least possible good.
" Such *unmotived* cruelty, men of your
" sense, Pedrillo, leave to fools.

" Believe me, with unfeigned regret that
" this can be the only relation between us,
" your sincere and unalterable *friend*,

" JASPER LAYTON."

Whatever Layton might have hoped from the servility of his note, from his assurances of confidence in Pedrillo's generosity, (written as they were with so trembling a hand as to be almost illegible,) he looked in vain for a

reply. He remained at home, listening with feverish expectation to the ringing of the door-bell; a suffering worthy of a poet's *inferno*, in all cases of delay and final disappointment. There came oyster-men, and orange-men, and ash-men, servants with billets, boys with bills, (scores of them,) fine gentlemen, and fine ladies; but that for which his strained ear listened came not, and evening arrived without any response whatever. He then despatched a servant with a note, inquiring of Pedrillo if he had received the former one. The man returned with a verbal message, that the note had been received.

"Did you ask," demanded Layton, "if there were any answer?"

"I did, sir, and Mr. Pedrillo said if you wished an answer, he would give it to you this evening at the place mentioned in your note."

"The place—I mentioned no place—you have made some stupid mistake, John; go back and tell him I specified no place—stop—good Heaven!—yes it is—it must be *there* he means," and he snatched his hat

and was rushing out of the house, when Flint opened the parlour-door, and called out, "We are waiting for you, Mr. Layton."

"Waiting—for what?"

"Are you not going to the theatre with the ladies?"

"No, tell them I have an indispensable engagement;" and then, losing every other thought in one terrifying apprehension, he hastened to the secret rendezvous of the club. The accustomed party was assembled there, with the exception of Pedrillo; and Layton, after an anxious survey of the apartment, passed into an inner room. Pedrillo soon after entered, inquired for him, and joined him.

Layton essayed to speak in his usual tone of friendly recognition. Pedrillo made no reply for an instant, but looked at him with a diabolical expression of mingled scorn and malignity, and then, going close to him, he said, in a smothered voice, his teeth firmly set, and beginning with an oath too horrible to repeat,

"——— think ye to escape me?—'*unmotived* cruelty!' Have ye not paltered

with me for months? Have ye not baited me on with hollow promises, finally, and at the very last, when you think I have no resource, to shake me off! '*Unmotived* cruelty'—have I not been a humble suitor at your daughter's door from day to day? have I not endured her coldness, her disdain, her shrinking from me, as if I were a loathsome pestilence—and this in the eye of gaping fools?—Have I not sitten passively by, like a doating idiot, and seen her cheek change at the mention of Marion's name?—'*Unmotived* cruelty!' has not my purse saved you again and again from prison—my silence prevented your being kicked from these doors, and driven from society?"

"Pedrillo—Pedrillo!"

"Nay, I care not who hears me. By Heavens, Layton, I will speak in a voice that shall be heard by every man, woman, and child in the city; your proud name shall be a by-word, coupled with cheat—liar—"

"Pedrillo!"

"Away—the hour of reckoning has come—Gentlemen," he cried, placing his hand on the door in the act of opening it. Layton

pushed away his arm, and stood firmly against the door: "Hear me, Pedrillo," he said, "for one instant—you have no proof—I will deny your charges to my last breath—they will not believe your assertion against mine—I their fellow-citizen—you a foreigner—a Spaniard!"

"A Spaniard!" echoed Pedrillo; he paused for a moment, and a flash of infernal joy lit up his face; "my thanks to you—you have forgotten the confession of guilt in your morning's note? Think ye the *Spaniard's* word will be believed by your *fellow-citizens*, vouched by the accused's written, voluntary confession?"

Layton now, for the first time, felt the full and inevitable force of the power that was about to crush him. The blood forsook his cheeks and lips, his arms fell as if they were paralyzed, an aguish chill shook his whole frame, and he staggered back and sank into a chair. No tortures of the rack could surpass those of the moments of silence and dread that followed. He was like one expecting the blow of the executioner, blind,

and deaf to every sound but the horrible hissing in his ears—when the spell of acute torment was broken by Pedrillo's voice, whispering close to him, "It is not yet too late!"

Layton gasped for breath; he looked up to Pedrillo with a wild, vacant gaze: "I tell you," repeated his tormentor, glaring on him like a tiger who has his prey in his clutches, "I tell you it is not yet too late—the alarm word is not spoken, and you may yet leave this place with unsullied reputation, if"—

Large drops of sweat stood on Layton's temples. "If what?—speak, Pedrillo—my brain is on fire."

"I will speak—and remember, I speak for the *last* time—mark my words—I am no longer to be put off with pretexts, and duped with promises—Emilie must be mine—without delay—you must accede to my terms—swear to obey my directions implicitly—not a breath for deliberation—yes or no?"

"Yes," was faintly articulated by the recreant father.

"Hold up your right hand then, and swear to obey my orders—precisely—hold up your right hand, I say—if," he added, with a scornful laugh, "if it be not palsied."

Layton held up his hand, and repeated after Pedrillo the most solemn form of adjuration. When this sacrilege was ended, Pedrillo said, "Come to my room to-morrow morning at ten o'clock. I shall have contrived and arranged the means to effect my purpose, and be ready to give you your instructions. Now, poor dog, go and join your fellows, and cheat and be cheated. You are not the only scoundrel, Layton, that passes along with a fair name; you are not the only one who feels the shame and the misery to consist not in the crime, but in the exposure!"

With this parting scoff, Pedrillo left his victim in an abyss of intolerable humiliation and anguish. He dared not look back; he could not look forward, and he madly rushed to the gaming table, to seek in its excitements a temporary oblivion. Before he left it, he had pledged and lost the largest portion of that money which in the morning

he had received from Gertrude Clarence for so sacred a purpose.

And this was the man who had so recently manifested, and really felt, generous instincts and kindly emotions. But what are instincts and emotions, compared with principles and habits? Those exhale in the fierce heat of temptation, while these move on in a uniform and irresistible current.

From the club, Pedrillo hastened to a scene of external gaiety which he felt to contrast frightfully with the wild disorder of the evil spirit that was anticipating the judgment of Heaven, and was truly 'its own hell.' He knew that Mrs. Layton and her party were at the theatre. He ascertained the box they occupied, and gained admittance at a moment when his entrance attracted no attention, the audience being apparently absorbed in observing a spirited actress, who was going through an animated scene of a popular comedy. We said all were thus absorbed; but it was evident to Pedrillo's quick perception, that two individuals of Mrs. Layton's party were engaged in a little dramatic episode of their own, far

more interesting to them than any counterfeit emotion.

Emilie Layton was seated beside Randolph Marion, simply dressed, without one of those costly ornaments, Pedrillo's favors, which she had recently worn in compliance with her mother's requisitions, and which, regarding them as the insignia of her slavery, she had cast off and spurned at the first moment of freedom. Nature's signs of another and a willing thraldom now lent the most exquisite embellishment to her beautiful face.

The deep, speaking glow of her cheek— the smile that played over her half-parted lips — the dazzling ray that shot from beneath her eye-lids, consciously downcast, were the jewels that revealed her happy spirit. Marion, at short intervals, uttered brief sentences, perfectly inaudible to all ears but Emilie's; but, as every body knows, the atmosphere of lovers, like that of pure oxygen, gives a marvellous brilliancy and force to all things visible and audible. In front of the lovers, and forgotten by them, but filling other eyes, sat Mrs. Layton, Miss Clarence, Miss Mayo, Major Daisy,

and Mr. *D.* Flint. It was a proud moment for our friend Flint; he had reached the station for which he had long panted, as mortals covet the unattainable — he was perched on the very top-rung of fashion's ladder. He felt a secret delightful conviction, that he was to be naturalized, where he had been an alien. He *had* told his love —(the damask of Flint's ruddy cheek was not destined to feed concealment), and he was received by Miss Clarence with something more than her usual kindness of manner. His innocent vanity knew not what this could mean, if it did not mean love; and, with a brilliant perspective in his imagination, and seated between Miss Mayo and Miss Clarence, he looked like the king of the gods, all-complacent.

Suddenly it seemed that a 'change came o'er the spirit of his dream.' His eye, as it rolled in friendly recognition from box to box, and glanced athwart the full pit, was all at once arrested by the figure of a plain old man, whose position was nearly in the centre of the pit, his chin resting on his cane, and who was devouring the play with

the eagerness of a novice. This old man was—we must let the reader into the secret —*D.* Flint's father, and honored by his son with filial reverence; but never had the worthy son anticipated such a trial of his virtue, as encountering his father in such a scene. If the old man should see him, he knew he would force his way to him; would greet him in his homely phrase—would call him by that Christian name, so long, so studiously, and so successfully concealed.

Any where else, at any other moment, he would have overcome these shrinkings—but at this critical point in his destiny, in the presence of Miss Clarence, and Miss Mayo, aristocratic and exclusive by birth, fortune, and feeling—and to encounter too, the sarcastic observation of Mrs. Layton, who delighted to remind him that he had no rights within her circle—and Daisy's shrug, which at every approach of the vulgar looked the pharisaical prayer, 'God save us of the privileged order;'—it was all too formidable an array of circumstances, even for *D.* Flint's iron nerves,—and, for the first time in his life, he meditated a pretext and a retreat,

and half-rose from his seat; but his honest soul revolted from the meanness, and he determined, with the resolution of a martyr, to maintain his position.

The second act closed, and the curtain fell, and the greater part of the audience rose, as usual. Flint (pardon him, gentle reader!) abruptly turned his back to the pit. He had scarcely effected this movement, when Miss Clarence said, "What a striking figure that old man is in the centre of the pit—he has a fine antique head—do you see him, Miss Mayo?"

"Yes—a hero of the stamp of the revolution, no doubt—probably one of the survivors of the Bunker-hill battle, whom, as my tory uncle says, time multiplies like the wood of the true cross."

Miss Mayo's random guess had hit the mark. He was one of the valiant heroes of that day, still so 'freshly remembered,' and its story the good old man had taught his son, and that son did now long to discharge his memory of its treasure; but he could far easier have fought his father's battles, than he could have

spoken of them then; for Miss Clarence exclaimed, "The old man is forcing his way towards our box." Flint turned his head just enough to get an oblique glance at his father, who was eagerly intent on the box occupied by our party; but another object than Mr. D. Flint attracted him. His eye was fixed on Pedrillo, who stood alone with folded arms — a most conspicuous figure, resting his back against the door of the box. Flint had his own emotions to take care of, or he would have noticed the sudden change in Pedrillo's countenance, when his eye, turning from its intent gaze on Emilie, encountered the old man's:—he tried to avert it, but it seemed spell-bound; in vain he tried 'to stiffen the sinews, and summon up the blood.' The ghastly paleness of his cheeks, and his livid lips, betrayed a thrilling, agonizing consciousness. Still, as if rivetted to the spot by a law of nature, he stood, while the stranger continued to approach, speaking to one and another, and pointing their attention to him, but evidently receiving no satisfactory reply. When the old man was near enough to be over-

heard by our party—"Will any one" he said, "tell me who that gentleman is?"

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared out a vulgar fellow, who had been amused at the stranger's extraordinary eagerness, "the old cock thinks he is crowing in his own barn-yard."

Nature had been warming and rising in Flint's honest bosom: at this insult it overflowed. He leaped into the pit, with the spirit of Bunker-hill, and roughly pushing aside the offender with one arm, he stretched the other towards the old man, exclaiming in a breath, "Impertinent rascal!" and "dear father, how are you?" His father started, as if waked from a dream, and grasping the extended hand, responded to the cordial greeting, "Duty! my son!—Lord bless you, Duty! how are you, my boy?" and he consummated the paternal benediction with a hearty kiss.

By this time all eyes were turned upon the father and son. Two or three loud laughs and a few cries of "encore!" were heard, but more honorable emotions prevailed, and generous sympathy with the simple demonstration of the true and pure

affections of nature burst forth in a general clap.

The father was happily unconscious that he was the subject of observation. His interest had reverted to its first object; but when he turned his eye in quest of Pedrillo, he had vanished. *Duty*, amid better emotions, had a throbbing fear of degradation, till his startled ear caught Miss Clarence's voice, seconded by Miss Mayo, asking him to conduct his father to their box. Flint's glistening eyes and protracted smile expressed his sense of the goodness that seemed to set the seal to his fortune. He immediately conducted his father out of the pit. When they were alone, "Did you know," inquired the father, "the person who stood, with his arms folded, behind the ladies, that spoke to you?"

"Know him! yes, sir, perfectly well—his name is Pedrillo; he is a rich Spanish merchant from Cuba."

"Spanish!—from Cuba! do you know any thing more of him?"

"Yes, sir, all about him—but do not stop here, sir, you are trembling with cold."

"Not with the cold," murmured the old man; "What else do you know of him, Duty?"

"Why, not much after all; I never liked the man—though I always thought he looked very much like you, sir."

"Do *you* think so, Duty?"

"Yes, sir, but pray come along, father—Mr. Pedrillo is perfectly well known to our first merchants, and if you have any curiosity about him, I can find out, to-morrow, whatever you want to know."

"Well, well!" said the old man with a sigh, "proceed then, Duty;" and he followed his son, communicating to him as he went, that he had arrived in town that evening, and, not finding him at his lodgings, and 'not feeling like going to sleep till he saw him, he had come to the theatre to while away the time.'

As they entered the box the young ladies, undaunted by Daisy's attempts at witty sarcasms, and Mrs. Layton's piquant raillery, gave the old gentleman the place his son had occupied between them, and in spite of a whisper to Gertrude from Mrs.

Layton, that she had best, *en Minerve*, crown *Duty's* father as Clairon crowned Voltaire, she and her friend persisted in rendering him all the respect that the reverence of youth and fashion could pay to honorable old age. Flint revelled in the honest triumphs of a good heart, and, it must be confessed, in an emotion destined to be less permanent.

'She has heard my name, she has seen my father, and never was she so kind and sociable,' thought he; and he felt that he had taken a bond of fate—had made assurance doubly sure.

Layton was punctual to his appointment, and at ten o'clock the following morning appeared at the City Hotel.

Pedrillo received him with the coolness and determined air of a man who has surveyed his battle-ground, accurately calculated his forces, and definitely arranged his plan—he had done so, and with the hardihood that scruples at no means to attain a long-cherished object. He was driven to this desperation by the threatening aspect of his affairs. He had, a few days previously,

received letters from a correspondent in the West Indies, informing him that his position in the United States was no longer a safe one; that depositions were about to be forwarded to judicial officers there, proving his participation in a noted piratical affair, in which some of the noble young men of our navy had suffered. He well knew that justice would neither linger, nor be sparing in her retribution; dangers were accumulating. He had, on the preceding evening, at the theatre, encountered the eye that of all others he most dreaded to meet—the eye of the good old man, his father—for Pedrillo was, as our readers must long ago have discerned, the recreant son of the elder Flint — the brother of our sterling friend *Duty*—the same still successful villain who, at fourteen, committed a bold robbery, and a bloody deed, and fled from his father's roof, and his country's violated law. How such a scion should proceed from such a stock, we know not. It was one of those aberrations in the moral history of man, that we can no more account for, than for such physical monsters as the

two-headed girl of Paris, or the Siamese boys.

But, among Mr. Flint's neighbours, there were of course some of those sage persons who satisfy themselves with their solution of the riddles of life; and when little Isaac Flint, (for that was the vernacular appellation of the heroic Henriques Pedrillo), a misdoer from the cradle, broke, for his sport, a whole brood of young turkies' legs; sewed up a pet gander's bill; or cut off a cow's tail; some of these sage expositors would shake their heads and say, "Spare the rod, and spoil the child." Others would call to mind certain cruel deeds done by a maternal ancestor of Isaac, upon the poor Indians. We honestly confess we are not among those who believe they can, or who care to 'see through' every thing; we like, now and then, to indulge ourselves in clouds and mysteries, and when such an inexplicable wretch as Pedrillo is found in the bosom of an honest family, we are willing to confess, what the Scotch woman said of the fine sermon, 'we hae nae the presumption to comprehend it.'

Pedrillo was a child of fortune—eminently successful in his bold career. He spent profusely the wealth he had accumulated in his lawless adventures; but the caution of middle age began to steal on him with its experience, and preferring security to unlimited but uncertain gains, he gradually withdrew from his bolder enterprises, and established a fair mercantile house in Cuba, and honorable commercial relations. Important money transactions recalled him to his native country. He had been absent twenty-five years, and he returned without a fear of meeting a familiar eye, or the belief that any eye could recognise in his person the rustic farmer boy. He was soon involved in intimate, and, as it proved, fatal relations with the Laytons. Affairs had now worked to a point that admitted no farther temporising.

Pedrillo dared not delay his departure a moment after Monday night. He had that all-conquering energy that finds stimulant in danger, and spur in difficulty. He was resolved, at whatever cost—there he had garnered up his soul—to possess himself of

Emilie Layton. His pride, his revenge, all the passions of his nature, were now enlisted to effect this purpose. He had measured and weighed her father, and he believed that though he had not the hardihood to execute a bold deed, he might be used as an effective instrument. With this conviction, Pedrillo continued a plot, in which, by a few master strokes, he meant to achieve the darling object, for which he had borne repeated disappointments, and months of irritating delay.

"You look pale and ill, this morning," he said, as Layton, ghastly and haggard, and with averted eye, strode up and down the apartment. "'Fortune, the jade,' showed you her other face, last night, I understand. She has relieved you of a goodly portion of the load of her favors you were so anxious to transfer to me yesterday morning—eh, my friend?"

"I came hither on business," replied Layton, impatient under the scoff he dared not resent.

"Yes, sir—you did come here on business; and, do it with what appetite you may, it must be done, and done quickly.

You have assured me that it is in vain for you to contend openly with the inclinations of your daughter. I believe you. You have weak nerves, Layton." Layton for the first time raised his eye to the speaker's face. "I repeat it—you have weak nerves. You could more easily order a surgeon to amputate a limb for your child, than yourself extract a sliver from her finger."

"I am not here to be analysed, sir."

"You are here for any purpose, to which I choose to apply you—you are henceforth an instrument—a tool, yes, a tool to be worked by my hand." Layton's cheek reddened, and the veins in his forehead swelled almost to bursting, but he remained silent, stricken with the sense of the abject state to which he had sunken. "Listen to me," continued Pedrillo, "while I communicate my plan. The grand masquerade, at the Park theatre, is to be on Monday evening. Your virtuous public is putting off the mask of hypocrisy, and putting on other masks. Miss Clarence, the saint! does not go to the masquerade—conscientious scruples, no doubt, ha! ha! *Tant mieux*, she is disposed of. Miss Emilie too, purposes to remain at home, *tête-à-tête*

with her *acknowledged* lover. Did I not see them together at the theatre?—I wanted but that to give vigor to my purpose. Mrs. Layton *does* go to the masquerade, with—— I know not whom—a scene of fine facilities for ladies of her temper!"

"What has all this to do with——"

"With my plans? Be patient, my friend, and I will tell you. The *Juno*, in which I *must* sail for Cuba, lies in the bay, a few hundred yards from Whitehall-wharf. The ship is, in all respects, subject to my orders. She sails at 12 o'clock, on Monday night. You are to induce Miss Emilie to accompany you to the masquerade. I think your influence, or authority, or both, are equal to this achievement. There we meet. You are soon obliged to leave the assembly on any pretext you choose—I leave that to your own ingenuity. You ask me to attend Miss Emilie home; a carriage, previously ordered, will be at the door; we will drive to the wharf. My boat, well-managed, awaits us there—a few pulls bring us to the ship, and once aboard, I am master of my destiny."

"But, good heaven, Pedrillo! you have made no provision for the marriage?"

"Oh, the marriage! — the marriage!" replied Pedrillo, tauntingly, and smiling, as well he might, at the importance Layton affixed to a rite, when he was violating the first law of nature. "The marriage, my dear sir—that shall be solemnized, if not on consecrated ground, and by book and bell, yet with all lawful ceremony. You have the surest pledge for this—the only pledge on which a man of sense relies. It is my *interest* to *marry* Miss Layton.

"Layton, 'there is a time for all things,' —you see I remember a few of the pious lessons conned in my childhood; I have given enough of life to transient *liaisons*; you understand me, Layton? and having decided to marry, what think you of showing to the world a wife, young, lovely, and beautiful? an Emilie Layton? Layton is a name well known in the West Indies—a proud *unsullied* name."

Layton's eye fell from Pedrillo's exulting countenance. His blood curdled. He asked,

faintly, "Where the marriage ceremony was to be performed?"

"On board the ship—we have a Catholic priest, who is going out to Cuba. He is well known to the Catholic bishop, who will solve any doubts you may entertain. But why any doubts? have I not been willing—willing! most anxious to have the ceremony performed under your own roof, and in your auspicious presence? Would I not now—you know I would, Layton—glory in leading your daughter to the altar, before the assembled universe? Have I not been foiled in all my honourable efforts? Has not my patience been tired, exhausted; and am I not driven, and by your imbecility, to this last desperate resource?

"Take courage, man—it may seem bad, but it is not so. I promise you a letter from the Narrows, signed by Emilie's own hand, attesting that the priest has done his duty, and that I have provided every luxury for her that love could devise, or money purchase. My man, Denis, has already taken my orders to an all-knowing French woman

to provide a lady's complete wardrobe. She has a carte-blanche as to expense; and farther, for I would quiet your paternal qualms—I am not more than half devil, Layton—there is a plot within a plot, in this drama of ours. Denis has followed his master's suit, and has long had a penchant for your wife's pretty maid, Justine. Love has been kinder to the man than to the master. Justine returns his passion, and but for her old parents would follow him to the world's end—such fools are women, young and old, in their loves. In sympathy with their tender passion, and to secure Justine's services for your daughter, I have promised to settle five hundred dollars on the old people. Justine has joyfully acceded to my terms. She enters into all my plans, *con amore*. She resents my wrongs; for *she* thinks—on my soul she does, Layton, that I have been falsely dealt by. Still drooping, man! do you any longer doubt my devotion to Miss Emilie's comfort—and happiness! if she will but be happy in the way I prescribe?"

Layton was, in truth, somewhat solaced by these details, as a man in a dungeon turns to the least glimmering of light; and he parted from Pedrillo more tranquilly than he met him, after having arranged the costumes in which they were to meet;' Emilie, in a blue domino; her father in black; and Pedrillo, (who never forgot the decoration of his fine person,) in the dress of a Spanish cavalier, with three white ostrich feathers attached to his hat by a diamond cross.

The days that intervened till the masquerade were marked with unqualified misery to Layton. He rode about the environs of the city like a half-frantic man, or shut himself within a solitary apartment of a tavern. He avoided his acquaintance, he shrank from every human being; but most of all he dreaded to encounter his wronged child, and his noble benefactress, whose trust he had so basely betrayed. 'But for that last fatal loss,' he said, and repeated to himself, 'I would confess all, and abide the consequences.' And he honestly thought so. Men often fancy, if circumstances were a

little differently moulded, they should have the courage to do right. 'If it were I alone,' thought Layton, 'that had to meet ruin—but it is not—Emilie—all my children must suffer with me; all must suffer remediless ruin! And yet to be a party in this plot against my child—I—her father, her natural guardian! But, after all, if it be a plot, it is to effect an object to which she once assented—which I have avowed—which the world has approved, which mothers and daughters have envied. Life is a lottery. Emily might marry Marion; but what does he promise more than I did, when her mother stood exulting with me at the altar? The poor child must endure a little disappointment, a little misery—yes, *misery* it must be! and she may return to us rid of this wretch, and with countless wealth—— but if she dies of a broken heart!—well, well, I am too far in to escape. That horrible violation of Miss Clarence's trust! I must make her believe I paid the money to Pedrillo; he will not be here to contradict it; he must be loaded with the obloquy of

the whole business. Emilie's husband! but his love, his disappointment, and his Spanish nature will be reckoned in his favor.'

Thus reasoning, and confuting his own reasonings, thus vainly endeavouring to stifle a voice that is never stifled, Layton passed the interval till Monday evening.

CHAPTER VIII.

"He has discovered my design, and I
"Remain a pinch'd thing; yea, a very trick
"For them to play at will." WINTER'S TALE.

THE purveyors of the amusements of our city took advantage of the interval between the extinction of an old law, and the framing of a new one, to get up masquerades in all places of public resort. Laudable pains were taken by the manager of the Park Theatre to conciliate that portion of society which, suspicious of every doubtful form of pleasure, was expected to frown on that which had been already condemned by the public censors on the ground of its affording facilities to the vicious. Gentlemen of the first respectability and fashion were selected as managers, and the maskers were not per-

mitted to enter the assembly without first unmasking to one of these gentlemen. The boxes were to be filled by the more sedate, or fastidious, or timid, who chose to be stationary spectators of the gaieties of the evening. The presence of a multitude of well-known observers, was expected to operate as an effective check to all tendencies to extravagance in the maskers.

Mrs. Layton had arranged a party for the masquerade. Her spirits were excited by the approach of a form of pleasure unknown in this country, save in some private circles, where very limited numbers and thorough mutual acquaintance had precluded the genius and artifices of invention. Her imagination was filled with the romantic incidents that novelists and dramatists have conjured up on this propitious arena, and she selected her character and meditated her part with the fresh interest of a girl of seventeen. She was to personate the Sybil. The character suited her genius and her figure, and she said, that 'inspiration, like herself, was of no particular age.' Her dress was of a black velvet, so happily designed by her own ex-

quisite taste, and executed by the felicitous art of a French dress-maker, as to avoid the grandmother and dowager aspect of velvet, to retain the grace without the form of the reigning fashion, and, in short, to appear sufficiently classic and imaginative for the Sybil of poetry. A few laurel leaves were arranged with a wild fantastic grace in the folds of her black hair; and over her face, instead of a mask, she wore a richly wrought white lace veil, which obscured without concealing her fine features, and, falling over her right shoulder, formed a profuse and beautiful drapery. She was writing the last sentences of Fate on embossed cards, which she purposed to place between ivory tables and distribute as sybilline leaves, when Gertrude entered her apartment, and, after an involuntary tribute to the beautiful personification before her, asked leave, to Mrs. Layton's utter amazement, to accompany her to the masquerade.

"My leave!" exclaimed Mrs. Layton, "your going will gratify me beyond expression. My dear—my—no, not capricious—my *mutable* Gertrude; forgive me, but I am

so charmed to see you waking from the rustic reveries of Clarenceville; if you stay with me three months longer, you will become quite imperfect and—interesting. But tell me, seriously, what has so suddenly reversed your decision against the masquerade?"

"Stronger motives for going than I had for declining to go."

"But, my immaculate friend, I thought your principles were against it."

"I did not say so."

"Oh, no, Gertrude, you are not so green, thank Heaven, as to make a formal profession of principles on trifling occasions; you only compel us to infer them from your actions."

"Thank you, but I am afraid this moral pantomime, this expression of principles by actions, like other pantomimes, owes half its significance to the observer; however, I am content it should do so, if your interpretation be but as favorable to-morrow as to-day." There was something in the intonation of Miss Clarence's voice, and in the expression of her half averted eye, that indicated more meaning than met the ear.

Mrs. Layton cast a penetrating glance at her: "You talk riddles, Gertrude, but I have no time to read them now. I presume Emilie has not changed her mind too? She prefers a *téte-à-téte* with Marion?"

"Certainly, to *all* other pleasures."

"She's right—happy child! these are the rose-tinted hours of love to her; the sands of time are 'diamond sparks' now; but will they be when, like her poor mother, it is near 'twice ten *tedious* years since married she has been?'—heigho!"

"What will they be? diamond sparks still, I trust. Emilie has done all that mortal can do to make them run brightly to the last."

"Bless me! Gertrude, you speak *con amore*. I am a believer in love too, but not in *love matches;* however, though I have not been consulted in the affair, I have no objection to the transfer of her engagement. I confess I do not comprehend it. It is all Layton's affair. I assume no responsibility about my children, and Layton has made no communication to me but of the bare unexplained fact. Indeed I have not seen him

since; he has come home late at night, and gone to his own room. How he has contrived to satisfy Pedrillo I cannot conceive, but I am told he was to sail to-day; he certainly was distractedly fond of Emilie—and so determined—it *is* a mysterious business; however I shall rest satisfied without making any inquiries. The rule of my philosophy is short and unerring. 'Whatever is, is best.'"

"Provided, Mrs. Layton, we cannot by our efforts make it better; but, pardon me, I forgot that my moralizing was limited to action—a difficult sort of *lay-preaching*. Promise me," concluded Gertrude, kissing Mrs. Layton with an affectionateness of manner that brought to that lady's mind the first days of their intercourse, "promise me that you will remember your motto to-morrow, '*Whatever is, is best.*'"

"Certainly, my dear girl, to-morrow and for ever."

'What can she mean?' thought she, as Gertrude left her, 'by these dark intimations?—nothing, after all, I'll answer for it—poor thing, her imagination is so excited

by this masquerade—for a woman of her education, she is surprisingly raw in some things—she thinks, no doubt, she is about to commit a monstruous sin: what cowards women are made by such preciseness!"

Timidity of conscience is a defence that Providence has set about human virtue, and those who are willing to part with one of its securities, have not felt sufficiently either its worth or its frailty.

Miss Clarence selected a black domino, the dress that would be most common, and therefore least conspicuous, and a mask similar to those generally worn, of paste-board and crape—an effectual screen. A floor had been extended from the stage over the pit; and, on first entering on this immense area, thronged with representatives of all ages of the world, and of every condition of society, she was nearly overwhelmed with the timidity which a delicate woman, herself disguised, would naturally feel in a scene of such fantastic novelty. But she was sustained by the conscientiousness of a secret purpose that was worth effort and sacrifice, and she was soon tranquillized by

the order that prevailed amidst confusion. There was a general and obvious consciousness of a new and awkward position; and, with the exception of practised foreigners, and a few native geniuses, like Mrs. Layton, there was a prevailing shyness and tameness, which indicated that masquerading was as little adapted to our society as tropical plants to our cold soil.

"Let us step aside from the crowd," said our Sybil to her most incongruous attendant, Major Daisy, in the character of a French Count of the old school. "I see some persons here who have promised to join me as soon as they find me out. Gertrude, do you really expect to remain incognita?"

"Certainly—you surely have not misunderstood me?" she replied earnestly, for at that moment she saw that Roscoe, in his ordinary costume, and without a mask, was approaching them.

"Then, *mon cher Comte*, you have only to forget that our friend bears the name of Clarence; a burden," she added, accommodating her voice to the Major's ear alone,

"from which you, as well as some others, would gladly relieve her."

"Oh Madame!" responded the delighted Count, "*vous avez vraiment l'esprit de la divination.*"

"And, Gertrude, you are the unknown,—*l'inconnue mystérieuse*, Count."

"A relation of the mighty unknown," exclaimed the Major forgetting his Countship, and speaking in character—"a *genteel* family!"

"Pardon me, Count; if I am to be ingrafted on that stock, I shall disdain the distinctions of your citizens' drawing-room—genteel! the mighty unknown takes precedence of all gentility, of nobility, of royalty, in all loyal hearts."

"And in my sybilline office I predict," said Mrs. Layton, "that he will be remembered when kings and potentates and all the boasts of heraldry are forgotten."

"And has the Sybil no kind prediction for one who has always done homage to her inspiration?" asked Roscoe, who now joined them, and, as he spoke, reverently raised the folds of Mrs. Layton's veil to his lips.

"The Sybil is, even to her favourites, but the minister of Fate. Take what she decrees," replied Mrs. Layton, holding high her ivory tablets, and dropping a card from between them. It fell within the ample folds of the sleeve of Miss Clarence's domino. She extricated it, and gave it to Roscoe, saying as she did so, "This from the oracle, and may its spiritual counsel or stop, or spur you."

Roscoe started, electrified by the unexpected voice, but, recovering instantly his self-possession, he replied, in a low tone, "The only oracle that can 'or stop, or spur me,' is veiled in more than sybilline mystery."

"*Lisez votre destinée, Monsieur,*" cried the Major, whose feeble attempts to support his character were limited to the painful effort of constructing a few French sentences.

"No, it shall be read by our priestess," said the Sybil, taking the card from Roscoe's hand, and placing it in Gertrude's; "why does our votary thus gaze at us?" she continued, interpreting the confused and inquiring glance that Roscoe cast, first on Ger-

trude, then on herself;—"is he offended by finding the Sybil attended by a priestess not found on classic records?—proceed, my priestess, there are few in this assembly who will detect the modern interpolation."

Gertrude glanced her eye over the card, and read the sentence aloud, feeling as if her burning cheek might even through her mask betray her private interpretation,

Your course is well nigh run,
Your prize is almost won,
And the treasure of your bridal day,
Will prove the treasure once cast away.

"Dark enough for Delphos!" exclaimed Roscoe—"treasure once cast away! Heaven knows that the good woman commended in scripture did not more earnestly seek her lost penny than I have sought the only treasure that ever shall be—'the treasure of my bridal-day'——he would have said, but it was a truth too seriously felt to be lightly uttered—he faltered, and then laughingly added, "Oh, it's a lying oracle!"

"Our favours contemned!" exclaimed the Sybil, "the destinies have misdirected

them," and, snatching the card from Gertrude, she shuffled it in with the rest, and again elevating the tablets, she dispersed the leaves among the crowd, who, attracted by her conspicuous figure, and lofty pretensions, had gathered about her. "There they go," she said, "full of pretty answers!—such as might indeed 'have been got from an acquaintance with Goldsmith's wives.'"

Roscoe held up the tablet, before Gertrude's eyes, which he had caught in the general scramble—"It is the same!" he exclaimed, "there is a fate in this which the future shall expound for me," and, with the deferential air of a devotee, he placed it in his bosom. Gertrude's heart was throbbing with the sweetest emotions, when a touch from Mrs. Layton directed her attention to an object of sufficient interest to command her thoughts, even at that moment.

"Is not that Pedrillo?" she whispered, "that Spanish Knight, with three white ostrich feathers in his cap."

"He certainly looks like Pedrillo," replied Gertrude in a tremulous voice—"but can he be here? the ship sailed to-day—

Emilie read the advertisement in the evening paper."

"That may be—cleared perhaps—but this is certainly Pedrillo. Observe—no one else would have so well arranged a Spanish costume. I always told you his taste was exquisite—it is he, beyond a doubt—that brilliant cross identifies him; he once showed it to me—there is not another such in the country. How he hovers about us—he has one of my leaves—poor fellow!—I should like to know his luck. "Sir Knight," she added, raising her voice, "if the destinies are but obedient to the Sybil's will, thy fate has been fortunate."

The Knight bowed, haughtily enough for a Castilian, but vouchsafed no other reply. "There are horribly portentous predictions among them," continued Mrs. Layton. "I would not outrage his feelings. On what pretext shall we ask to see it?—not to translate it into Spanish, for I see that African princes, Indian chiefs, blind girls, deaf and dumb, all have a gift to read my prophetic words—do aid me, Gertrude."

"My mistress commands me, Sir Knight,"

said Gertrude, "to read aloud your fate." He gave her his card, first passing his finger emphatically across the last line, and she read as follows—'*Dangers beset thee—vengeance pursues thee—blood is in thy path,*

Listen, stranger, to this prophecy of mine,
but fear not,
The blood's another's—the victory is thine!

"Oh, my most tragic flight!" exclaimed the Sybil, really alarmed at the possible interpretation of her random prediction. "Indeed, Sir Knight, I designed that for my friend, the Count here, or some other carpet hero, who never encounters a worse danger than an east wind, nor a more fearful vengeance than a lady's frown."

"*Pardonnez, ma Sybille,*" exclaimed the Count, "*J'ai mon sort et j'en suis très content,—écoutez.*"

'*Hope flatters—fortune smiles—success awaits thee.*

Then linger not—the secret NOW *disclose:*
The fair adored will not thy love oppose."

The Major's imagination was for once carried captive. The prophecy elevated him far above his native region of prudence; and, availing himself of an opportunity which was afforded by the company falling into ranks and promenading to the music, he actually *committed* himself, and in unambiguous words made an offer, in the full meaning of that technical term. He had thrown the die that had remained in his tremulous hand for the twenty years that he had fluttered about the successive Cynthias of the minute—the belles and heiresses, who had fallen into the oblivion of wives and mothers, without the boast of an offer from the wary Major. Not Camillus, when he cast his sword into the scale—not Cæsar, when he passed the Rubicon—not all the *signers*, when they penned their immortal autographs, felt their souls dilate with such a mighty swell, as Major Daisy, when he thus boldly encountered the possibility of a refusal. What then was his surprise, to find that Miss Clarence did not, in the slightest degree, partake his agitation — that she listened to him, much as one listens to a

teller of dreams! that her feelings were evidently deeply absorbed in some other subject; and that when obliged to reply to him, she treated his declaration *en badinage*, as a dramatic part of the masquerade; and finally, when compelled to answer his reiterated protestations seriously, she dismissed them, as the tame and wearisome tale of every hour.

The poor Major! caught in the very net he had so long, so well escaped; and treated, after all, as game not worth catching! His heart burned within him, his head swam, and he stepped short and high, when he was relieved by Roscoe's approach—and stammering out 'my dear sir, I have an engagement—be good enough to take my place,' he resigned his position to one who produced as sudden a change in Gertrude, as if she had been transported from the north pole to the equator.

Roscoe had lingered near Mrs. Layton, to avail himself of the permission accorded by Gertrude in their last interview, and, at the first instant he could obtain a private hearing, he said to her, "Tell me, I entreat you,

the name of the lady who personates your priestess."

Mrs. Layton, determined to maintain her character, and sport with the eager curiosity betrayed in Roscoe's tremulous voice, (she did not suspect how much deeper was the feeling than curiosity,) replied, "Do you, presumptuous mortal, inquire my priestess' name, when you have so long disdained to join the troop of pilgrims to her shrine—neglected to lay a single offering on her altar!"

Roscoe assured her—and she could not doubt it—that he was serious; but the Sybil was obstinate, and he, impatient of the spell, which he began to despair of ever breaking, left her and joined Gertrude.

Roscoe certainly did not, like the major, 'make an offer,' nor did he talk of love in any of the prescribed or accepted terms. But there is a freemasonry in love—it has its hidden meaning; and we should despair—if we were bold enough to repeat the short and low sentences exchanged by our lovers—we should despair of making them intelligible to the uninitiated. They would, in all

simpleness, wonder what there was to cast so potent a spell over the scene, that it vanished from their senses—what, to make Gertrude's cheeks burn, and her hands cold—to make Roscoe's heart throb in his manly bosom, and suffuse that eye whose lofty glance could thrill an assembly of his peers with tears as soft as ever trembled in a woman's eye. There was no declaration—no confession—but the dawning consciousness of being beloved—the first blissful moment of assurance—a moment for which there is not in all the experience of true love a counterpoise or equivalent.

The happy do not need observers, and we leave them for those who demand our interest, and certainly deserve our sympathy.

Emilie Layton was sitting at home alone in the parlor, apparently quite absorbed in a book that lay before her, when the opening of the door quickened her pulses. She did not look up; the door was closed, and a moment of deep silence followed. It was her father that entered, and for one moment he stood, heart-stricken gazing on his destined victim. She was bending over her

book, her brow resting on her hand—a hand that had the fresh dimpled beauty of childhood. The light of the astral lamp fell, as if it had been adjusted by a painter's art, on her golden hair, glowing cheek, and ivory throat; her beauty would have arrested the dullest eye; but it was more than her beauty that at that moment thrilled her father's soul: the gentle obedience of her life, her danger, her defencelessness—and he, her natural shield, made the instrument of her destruction! But it was too late to recede or to hesitate; any thing, he thought, would be more tolerable than the pang of the present moment, and, making a desperate effort, he said, in a loud voice, that broken and unnatural as it was, was evidently meant to be gay, "Emilie, my darling, I have a favor to ask of you—a frolic on foot—I want you to go to the masquerade with me." He threw a bundle on the table; "there is a domino and mask for you."

"But, papa!"

"No expostulation, if you please, the carriage is at the door; no one knows that we are going—we shall see without being seen,

we will come away whenever you choose—in ten minutes, if you like—indeed I cannot stay longer. Do you hesitate? Emilie! it is extraordinary that you will refuse this small request!"

"I do not refuse, papa," she replied, hastily throwing on the domino, while her voice, her whole person trembled, almost shivered with emotion. Layton hurried on his domino. Every motion was like that of an insane man. He opened the door, "Are you ready!—are you ready, Emilie?"

"Yes, quite ready."

Again he shut the door, turned to Emilie, and throwing his arms around her, he burst into tears, "Oh, my child, my child—promise me that you will never curse your father!"

"Curse you, papa!—every day on my bended knees do I implore a blessing on you—and I will while I live—so help me, God—wherever I am, wherever you are"—

"Wherever I am!" echoed Layton, recoiling from her and striking his hands together, "I shall be—O Emilie, Emilie, pity me!"

"Pity you, papa! I do pity you from the bottom of my heart——you are not well—let me send away the carriage—we will not go to the masquerade, will we?"

"We *must*, Emilie," he replied, summoning his resolution. He feared he had already betrayed himself, and he added, pressing his hand to his forehead, "my head has been in a whirl—it's going over now; I took an extra bottle of champaigne to-day, and my nerves are shattered of late. Throw on your shawl, my child, and let's be gone."

Emilie took a shawl that hung over her chair; her father snatched it from her and threw it across the room; "That's your mother's!" he exclaimed, "wear no memorial of your parents, Emilie. Oh, had your mother possessed one thousandth part of your goodness, I should never have been the wretch I am."

Emilie was impatient to end the frightful scene—"Here is a shawl of Gertrude's, papa," she said; "I am ready now."

"Gertrude Clarence! she is an angel—but angels have not power to save, why should devils to destroy?"

Emilie made no further reply. She perceived that every word she uttered served but to increase the agitation it was meant to allay, and she quietly preceded her father to the carriage. Not another syllable was interchanged. The silence was unbroken, save by a sigh or groan from the miserable father, such as might have proceeded from a criminal going to execution, and as, with him, 'time gallops withal,' so it seemed to Layton to impel him with inexorable speed into that scene where he was to seal his child's fate. The first and the only object he saw, when they entered the brilliant assembly, was the Spanish knight. *He* too, instantly caught a glimpse of the two persons he had awaited with a restless ness and trepidation that he feared were betraying his secret purposes, even through his disguise; and, making his way through the crowd, his towering plumes nodding above all heads, he approached them, and touching his hat to Layton, he placed himself at Emilie's side, and in a whisper told her that he had at the first glance recognised her. She made no reply, and they pro-

ceeded, with the tide that set that way, towards the stage. They passed a Mary of Scotland complaining to Queen Elizabeth, not of violated faith, but of a smoking kitchen-chimney; a Sappho bewailing, not the treachery of her lover, but the loss of a cook; sweet Anne Page dancing with an Indian chief, both in Charraud's best style; and Sir Roger de Coverly mated with a sultana. But these and all other incongruities were unnoticed by the trio. Emilie felt her father's step becoming more and more faltering, and as her arm, that was locked in his, pressed against his side, it seemed to her that his throbbing heart would leap from his bosom. He stopped as they approached that part of the stage where her mother retained her station, still the ruling spirit of the scene. Her spirits were wrought to the highest pitch by the success of her character—she kindled in the light of her own genius. Her sallies were caught and repeated by those who could comprehend them, and those who would fain appear to comprehend them — her brilliancy cast a ray of light even on the

dullest and dimmest. Layton felt that there was something insulting in her careless gaiety and exultation at a moment when he was steeped to the very lips in misery. His mind was in that excited and bewildered state when demons seem to be the ministering spirits, when every wild unbidden thought presses with a supernatural force. He stood fixedly for an instant, his eyes glaring on his wife. She was in happy unconsciousness of his gaze. 'I could speak daggers to her,' he thought—'and I will,' and, letting fall Emilie's arm, he penetrated through the ranks that inclosed his wife, and said, in a voice she well knew, low and husky as it was, "One word of true prophecy for all thy lying inventions, Sybil. 'Walk in the light of your fires, and in the sparks ye have kindled; but this shall ye have—ye shall lie down in sorrow!'"

This sudden apparition, and these startling words so blanched Mrs. Layton's cheek, as to define precisely the limits of her rouge. She looked after the speaker, but he had rejoined his companions, and was lost in the general stream.

Emilie perceived, as her father resumed her arm, that he seemed lost and uncertain which way to turn his steps. "You are not well, papa," she whispered; "do let us leave this place as soon as possible."

"We shall leave it soon enough, my child."

The knight gave him a card; '*delay not*' was scrawled upon it. The words seemed to scorch him as he read them. He obeyed the mandate, and they retraced their steps towards the lobby. Suddenly Emilie slackened her pace, and then stopped. She dropped her pocket handkerchief. A lady who passed near picked it up, and, without appearing even to look for its right possessor, tied it around her throat, and Emilie proceeded, unconscious of, or passively submitting to the loss.

When they reached the lobby, "Surely, papa," said Emilie, faltering, "there is no occasion for Mr. Pedrillo to go further with us—his costume attracts attention."

"He must go home with you, Emilie," replied her father; "I am too ill to attend you—I must stop at a physician's, and have

some blood let—Pedrillo, look for a carriage." He uttered the premeditated words mechanically. They were scarcely audible; but Emilie, whatever might have been her reluctance, proceeded without any farther remonstrance. It would have been impossible to say which was most trembling, most agitated—father or daughter. As he assisted her into the carriage, he retained her hand for a moment, and pressed it fervently to his lips. Emilie felt his tears gush over it, and, springing forward, she kissed his hand tenderly, and mingled her tears with his. He groaned aloud. The knight's impatient foot was already on the step. The wretched father grasped his arm: "Pedrillo," he said, "God have mercy on your soul, as you are true to my poor child!"

"Amen!" was the only response, but never was a saint's prayer uttered with a deeper, more fervent, or more sincere emphasis. The carriage door was closed, the horses driven swiftly away, and Emilie sank on the bosom of her companion, exclaiming, "Oh, Marion, Heaven will forgive my poor father!"

Marion, (for it was in truth Emilie's true love that personated the Spanish knight,) Marion soothed her with every suggestion that tenderness could supply. While they are disencumbering themselves of every trace of the masquerade, and putting on their travelling cloaks, hats, &c., previously provided—while the carriage halts in one of the cross-streets leading to Powles Hook, and while four good steeds are being attached to it, we must return once more to the masquerade, and to Gertrude, who, in obedience to the preconcerted signal of the dropped handkerchief, was hastening to follow her friend. Roscoe was still at Gertrude's side. We have been compelled to repeated recession, and long as it may appear since we left him at that enviable station, the time seemed to him short as a blissful dream, when Gertrude said, "Mr. Roscoe, I must put your generous faith to one more proof—I promise it shall be the last. Will you attend me to my place of destination?"

Roscoe's faith was for a moment disturbed, and he frankly expressed his distrust. "You did not surely come here alone?"

"No, I certainly did not; but I do not see the person on whom I relied to attend me, and I must go alone if you hesitate—my engagements will not permit me one moment's delay."

"Pardon me," he said, offering his arm.

"I do pardon you," she replied, taking it, "though I perceive you are but half assured." He answered nothing till they had left the house, and made their way through the rabble of hackmen and idlers that surrounded the door. "Is this haste necessary?" he then asked, checking their hurried pace: "has it any object but to end this brief interview, and to leave me in the ignorance which I can no longer endure, and which, permit me to say, after your promise at our last interview, you ought no longer to protract?"

"My haste is essential, Mr. Roscoe, and believe me, it has no reference to you."

Roscoe's pride was wounded. "Forgive my presumption. I certainly ought not to have imagined that you, who have shown such utter indifference to my wishes—such an entire want of confidence in me, should have

any farther reference to me, than as the instrument of your convenience."

"Mr. Roscoe!"—there was a treacherous tremulousness in Gertrude's voice. After pausing for an instant, she proceeded, "You are unkind and unjust to me—you have not claimed the performance of my promise. I am at this moment giving you the strongest proof of my confidence—making you privy and accessory to a hazardous elopement."

"An elopement!" exclaimed Roscoe, aghast.

"Yes," replied Gertrude, smiling; "an elopement—of which I am a zealous aider and abettor, and an humble attendant of my principals to Virginia, our ultimate destination."

"To Virginia! Then I now claim the fulfilment of your promise." Roscoe paused, and Gertrude was as anxious to pronounce the word that would dispel the mystery, as Roscoe could be to hear it; but it seemed to her like the word of doom, and while it hovered unspoken on her trembling lips, Roscoe continued, "I beseech you to end

this tormenting suspense, which I flattered myself the chances of every day would terminate. Have I not endured it long enough — patiently enough? For Heaven's sake, do not walk at this furious rate—if you knew what efforts my deference to your wishes has cost me, you would not hesitate. I care not what you disclose—my interest in you is independent of all circumstances and persons other than yourself—I was proud—fastidious, it may be. There was a time when I should have shrunk from the disclosure of a vulgar or obscure name—or a name allied however remotely to dishonor; but now truly I care not for any of these things—my faith, my hope, my love centres in you alone."

Notwithstanding the intense interest with which Gertrude listened, and notwithstanding Roscoe's earnest remonstrance, she had not slackened her speed; and she now saw a carriage awaiting her at a few paces from her, and Marion, who had descried her, advancing hastily. She had just time to falter out a hasty reply to his last words—"Then is there an end of all motive to fur-

ther concealment," when Marion exclaimed, "For mercy's sake, make haste, my dear Miss Clarence!"

"Miss Clarence!" exclaimed Roscoe—"Gertrude Clarence?"

"Yes, Gertrude Clarence—but not a '*prize lady*.'"

Roscoe was dumb for an instant, (seconds were now precious,) over-powered with thick-coming thoughts—surprise at this solution of the mystery, and amazement at his own stupidity—such as is felt in all inferior riddles—that he had not before discovered the solution—recollections, anticipations, fears, and hopes were thronging, and all concentrated in that one moment.

They were already at the carriage door—Emilie had exclaimed joyfully, "Oh Gertrude, you've come!" and Roscoe had recovered his self-possession sufficiently to say to Marion, "Get in first, if you please—I have one word to say to—Miss Clarence."

"But a single word, I entreat," replied Marion; "there is no time to lose."

"In one word then," whispered Roscoe; "may I follow you?"

Gertrude uttered that precious monosyllable worth in some cases the whole English language besides, and sprang into the carriage, but not till Roscoe had pressed her hand to his lips, and breathed out a "God bless you"—the shortest and best of all benedictions.

Marion was drawing up the blind, when Emilie stopped him, while she entreated Roscoe, who stood as if transfixed beside the carriage, to return to the masquerade, and attend her mother home, but on no account to betray his knowledge of their departure.

Roscoe promised. The blind was again drawn up, the carriage hastily driven to a boat in waiting, which conveyed them without any delay to Powles Hook, whence they proceeded on their southern route.

CHAPTER IX.

"Il me semble qu'il y a des friponneries si heureuses que tout le monde les pardonne."—VOLTAIRE.

PEDRILLO deviated from his best policy when he communicated the secret of his conspiracy to his man Denis, and permitted him to extend it to Justine.

Denis, it is true, was a well-tried tool of his master's, who had never been betrayed into infidelity by any impulses or meltings of nature. But Justine was of a softer temper—a woman, with a woman's sympathies and affections. All these Denis had artfully enlisted in his master's cause, by making her believe they were only righting the

wrongs of true love, and inflicting on Miss Emilie the penalty of her broken faith. The present violence being thus adjusted in Justine's feminine scales, her imagination was easily seduced by the brilliant perspective of honors and wealth that awaited her young lady, and of which she, the satellite and lesser light, would partake in liberal measure.

Her conscience was thus made tolerably quiet; but she had another anxiety that she could not so easily put to rest. She had, as has been seen, secured a sum for her parents, which was more than an equivalent for the avails of her services; but she loved the old people with a true, filial love; and though, as she said, and repeated to herself a thousand times, 'it was according to the course of nature to leave father and mother, and cleave to the husband;' yet it was most unnatural and brutish to quit them, and perhaps for ever, without their consent and blessing. She revolved this in her mind, till it was filled with sad misgivings and superstitious presages; and at last, to quiet her heart, she stole to her mother, and poured all its secrets into her bosom.

Her painful but affectionate confidence—nothing melts a woman's heart like a voluntary confidence—her confessed and true love for Denis—was there ever woman, young or old, who had not a chord to vibrate to the 'ringing of the true metal?'—her disclosure of her lover's, and his master's almost incredible liberality, all swayed the mother to a passive acquiescence in Justine's wishes. She gave the asked consent, and the craved blessing, and promised to reconcile her father, who was old and in his dotage, to her departure.

Success and happiness had a common effect. Justine became communicative to excess. At first, she had only sketched the outlines of the conspiracy—she now went on to detail all, to the minutest particulars, including in these the magnificent dress Mr. Pedrillo was to wear at the masquerade; and even the name of the humble artisan who was to be its fabricator.

Justine's mother listened to this plot with a strong and natural curiosity, and in her interest in its contrivance and result, and in her daughter's part in the drama, she

lost every other consideration. But solitary reflection has a marvellous efficacy in adjusting the balance of justice; and when left alone, a sense of Miss Layton's violated rights dawned upon her—and being an upright and kind-hearted creature, she found that her previous knowledge of the affair was a participation in its guilt that was like to prove an intolerable burden to her conscience. What was to be done? She was pledged to Justine—she had given her consent—that she might retract; but she had given her blessing—that was an appeal to Heaven; and, according to her simple faith, as she afterwards expressed it to Gertrude, 'what was once sent up there, could not be taken back again.' She knew Miss Clarence, and was bound to her by ties of gratitude; and, after much painful deliberation, she determined to obtain a private interview with her, and disclose the whole affair. This she immediately effected; first binding Miss Clarence, by a solemn promise, that whatever measures were taken to counteract the plot, they should not be such as would prevent Justine's peaceable departure

with her lover; nor, if possible to avoid it, such as would publicly disgrace Pedrillo.

Miss Clarence listened to the tale with horror. That Pedrillo, a man unfettered by principle, without ties or responsibilities to the country, and stimulated by love, disappointment, and resentment, should contrive this abduction, did not suprise her; but that Emilie's father should be an accessory to the crime, implied a degree of iniquity beyond her belief. A little reflection, however, convinced her that the tale 'was o'er true.' She recollected expressions that had escaped Layton, which indicated that he was in Pedrillo's power, in a more alarming sense than would be implied by pecuniary obligations. The old woman's story explained his absenting himself from the house since her memorable interview with him in the library, and accounted for his wild and haggard appearance on the only occasion on which she had since seen him, and when he had studiously avoided her. Her own good sense, and preference of straight-forward proceedings would have led her at once to disclose her knowledge of the affair to all the parties

concerned, and to counsel Emilie to give Marion, without delay, a legal right to protect her. But she was hampered by her promise to the old woman; and knowing that Pedrillo was under the inevitable necessity of leaving the country on Monday night, she hoped it was possible, as it certainly was most desirable, so to manage his relations with Layton, that there should be no explosion between them. She determined to communicate with Marion, assured that she might trust to his zeal, whatever plan they adopted to secure safety to Emilie. Marion came at her summons, and never did two grey-headed counsellors deliberate more cautiously on the means to preserve a nation, than they on the best plan to be adopted; but they were many years from grey hairs, and it was not strange that a little romance should have mingled in their project.

They agreed that Layton must no longer be allowed the custody of his daughter; and Marion eloquently pleaded his right to assume the trust, and urged various and cogent reasons in favour of conveying Emilie

to his mother's dignified protection. This might be effected, if Miss Clarence would give the sanction of her presence to their elopement. Gertrude's heart, at this moment, clung to New York; but she sacrificed, unhesitatingly, her own inclinations, and acquiesced cordially in his proposition.

After discussing and dismissing various plans, it was at last decided that Marion should employ the person who already had Pedrillo's order, to make for him a fac-simile of the dress directed by Pedrillo; that farther, this person should be induced, by an adequate reward, to delay sending home Pedrillo's dress an hour beyond the stipulated time. It would perhaps be more accurate to say, that the punctuality to Marion was paid for—the breach of that virtue being in the common course of things, and therefore not liable to awaken Pedrillo's suspicions.

The precious hour thus secured was to allow the parties time enough to meet at the masquerade, and to escape from it far beyond (as they, presumptuously trusted) any further pursuit or annoyance from Pedrillo.

They would fain have hit upon some scheme that would have saved the miserable parent from proceeding to an overt act in this guilty combination; but this seemed the only one by which Emilie's safety could be compatible with his preservation from the fatal consequences of a rupture with Pedrillo. Every particular was arranged before a disclosure was made to Emilie.

As soon as she recovered from her first shock of grief, and alarm, she remonstrated. Anxious as she was to escape from the toils set for her, she shrunk from being even the passive instrument of dyeing her father more deeply in sin. To the last, she continued unwilling and irresolute, and finally, and notwithstanding her lover's previous and earnest injunctions, when she saw her father's struggles, her tender heart was melted; and like all timid animals, feeling her courage rise in extremity of danger, she had, as has been seen, entreated him not to go to the masquerade, nobly willing to encounter danger herself, to save her parent from crime. But whichever way *he* turned, there was no possible redemption for him,

and he pursued the path marked out by his evil genius to his own destruction.

After he had parted from his child, as his agonized conscience truly whispered, *for ever*, he experienced for a little time a horrible species of relief. The last and worst act was done. Resistance was over. Like the angels expelled from heaven, he no longer contended with good spirits; he was no longer solicited by the pleadings of nature —the voice of God. A sort of torpor stole over him, and, scarcely conscious of any motion of his will or body, he turned his steps towards his old haunt at the club-room. A disordered countenance was no novelty there, and attracted no attention. His associates were engaged in a game of desperate chances. He joined them. Fortune smiled upon him, but he was so far beyond her influence that he looked upon the monstrous winnings he was accumulating with the glazed unnoticing eye with which a man, walking in his sleep, regards outward objects; but the sleeper awakened on the brink of a precipice hanging over an unfathomable abyss, would not more suddenly

have changed his aspect, than did Layton—his dull eyes flashed, his cheeks became crimson and livid in an instant, as the door opened, and Pedrillo appeared before him, the same Spanish knight, as he believed, to whom he had one hour before resigned his daughter. Layton started up and grasped Pedrillo's arm, and would have said, "Where is she?" but the words choked him. Pedrillo shook him off as if he were a reptile. He staggered back and leaned against the wall, while Pedrillo, with the coolness of a savage who can torture and be tortured without a sign of emotion, turned to the gamblers, whose interest in their game was for the moment suspended, and detailed to them with clearness and precision the history of his relations with Layton, from their first meeting to this moment. Layton stood with his eyes fixed, motionless, almost senseless. He did not hear the but half-smothered execrations of his associates, when they were told how he had duped and defrauded them. That tale, that exposure — so dreaded—avoided at such horrible cost, fell now unheeded as household words. He did not

hear the outcries at his parental treachery. He stood like a man upon a wreck, deaf to the last groans and struggles of the sinking ship; but, as that man might strain his eye after a little boat in which he had embarked his child, so did his soul cling to that one treasure that might still ride out the storm that was engulfing himself. He made no denial, no protestation, no appeal; he was perfectly silent, till Pedrillo stated that Layton had finally crowned all his other treacheries with perfidy to him. "I deny it," he exclaimed, "by all that's holy, I deny it—I gave her into his possession—God help her as I speak the truth!—where is she?—in Heaven's name, Pedrillo, tell me where she is?"

Pedrillo's passions now burst forth with tenfold fury for his previous calmness. He exhausted every name of infamy, every form of anathema upon Layton, "Tell you where she is!" he concluded, "did I not, after waiting an eternity for my cursed tailor, go to the masquerade, and look and wait in vain for you?—did I not then go to your house, and receive from your servants the tale you

had prepared? I returned to the masquerade and again sought you, in vain. I spoke to your wife—she professed ignorance of every thing; she dared to sport, and laugh at my demands; but I have spoken a word in her ear that has ended her sport for ever. I understand ye—you believed that *at the last* you might deceive me with impunity. You flattered yourself that I could not stay in the country after to-night—but I will stay—I will have revenge, if I perish in the fire I kindle."

Layton was at first confounded and bewildered by the appearance of Pedrillo. He firmly believed that Emilie was in his power; for that he had the testimony of his senses. He was confused by the horror of some new and unthought-of form of misery or dishonor to his daughter; and it was not till after Pedrillo's repeated declarations that the truth stole upon him. "I too have been deceived!" he exclaimed, and added, in a faltering voice, "thank God!—thank God!" He attempted to raise his hand to his throbbing head, but his mind and body were ex-

hausted. He had no strength to resist a new emotion, and he sank under it, and fell lifeless at Pedrillo's feet.

Pedrillo spurned him as if he were a dead dog, and, without replying to the exclamation that burst from every tongue, he rushed out of the house, and returned to Mrs. Layton's.

He found Mrs. Layton in the parlor, stretched on the sofa in violent hysterics. Roscoe, who had attended her home, and whom she had entreated not to leave her, was walking up and down the room, meditating, as it might be, (for such reflections are natural to a man in his position,) on the singular channels in which some women's sensibilities flow; or, we rather suspect, if it could be known, and might be told, that he was thinking no more of Mrs. Layton nor of her concerns, than if she belonged to another planet.

At the sound of Pedrillo's footsteps she started from her women, who were chafing her temples and hands, and, taking up an open letter that lay beside her, she threw it to him, saying, with a terrified look, "Read

that, Mr. Pedrillo—you will then be convinced that I have had no concern in this unhappy affair."

The letter was from Emilie, and contained a brief communication of her intentions, and an explanation of the reasons for her clandestine departure. She had left the letter with one of the maids, with an express order that it should not be given to her mother till the next day. The girl was terrified by her mistress's nervous convulsions, and fancying that she must die if she had not present relief, and hoping the letter might prove the panacea, she produced it. The hysterics continued, for they were caused by anxieties more immediately selfish than any thing that concerned her child.

Pedrillo glanced his eye over the letter—"On the southern road"—he murmured, "by Heaven, I'll follow them!" He rushed out of the house, re-invigorated by a new purpose, which he conceived and executed with the rapidity of a man accustomed to the sudden vicissitudes of a desperate life. His men, men of proof, were still awaiting him at their assigned posts. He selected the two

cleverest and most daring, and mounted them and himself upon the three fleetest and strongest horses to be procured. He crossed the ferry to Powles Hook, and followed on the track of our travellers. They were two or three hours ahead of him, but he calculated rightly that after the first stage they would have no apprehensions of being pursued, and would either proceed leisurely, or stop for the night.

Pedrillo's companions did not at all relish their partnership in this wild affair. Their passions were not stimulated, nor their judgments obscured by any personal interest, and they saw clearly the rashness and folly of the enterprise. But they dared not speak out boldly. "What, captain," asked one of them, "is your plan, if we overtake these runaways? This is no country for our trade. It will be an awkward business. Have you thought how we are to manage?"

"Yes; I have thought of every thing."

"That we have to traverse a settled country, and pass a ferry?"

"Yes; and if the country were settled with legends of devils, and the ferry led to

the infernal regions, it should not stop me—listen to my plan.

"We shall probably overtake them on the road—one of you can do with a drivelling, unarmed coachman—if there is time, and convenient place bind him to a tree—if not, despatch him; we have no time to waste. The fellow in the carriage will make a stout resistance, but short—he is not likely to be armed; such precautions are rare, and rarely needed in this country. When he is done for"——Pedrillo paused, 'I will not,' he thought, 'give her this excuse for hating me,' —"No, my men; if it can be helped, we will shed no blood; I think ye have no appetite for that—bind *him* too,—maim him, if necessary, to secure us from pursuit."

"And is there not an extra lady to be disposed of?"

"Yes; we must take her with us."

"But, is it prudent to encumber our flying retreat with any superfluous baggage?"

"She will not encumber us—we must go in the carriage. If we leave her, she will release the men, and contrive some means to

overcome us at last, for she is as ingenious as the devil!"

"Well, we shall have a merry company of them, if we ever get to our good ship again. We left the priest tying Denis to a neat little damsel he brought on board this evening. But the carriage, captain; how are we to navigate a land vessel?"

This questioning and demurring was quite new to Pedrillo, used to absolute command, and implicit obedience, and he began to grow restive under it; but he prudently smothered his rising wrath, and replied, "I am something more than a mere seaman—I can manage four or six in hand, as well as the ropes of a ship. I shall put on the coachman's coat, and mount the box. And more, since you are terrified with the spectre of a ferry—know that we shall not retrace our steps, but strike across to Perth Amboy; I have ordered the boat to come through the Kills and meet us there—are you content?"

"If we were sure not to find the horses jaded?"

"And if we do! have we not here three

first rates, that we could drive to Philadelphia before we should be overtaken?"

"But three are not four, captain."

"The devil, man! do you think to stop me with straws? shall we not find one of all their four, sea-worthy?"

"Well then, captain, if we overhaul them on the road, in a solitary place, before daylight, we may capture them; but supposing they are hauled up, in a snug harbor, where there are perhaps twice or thrice our number of men to aid them; will you not then tack about?"

"No, by my soul! if they are protected by a regiment of men and devils, I will not tack about—I have staked my life on this die."

"But we have not ours," muttered one of the men.

"Then stop, both of ye," cried Pedrillo, reining in his horse. They halted theirs, and he rode in front of them. "Go back," he said, "but not to the ship; you share neither danger nor spoil with me more—I promised ye, and you know I never yet have broken my faith to you—I promised ye more

gold than your souls are worth—but go—seek another service, and a more generous master. I can do my work alone—a thousand cowards could not help me. I feel the strength of twenty good men in my right arm—come Triton." His little dog leaped up at his call, and received a caress. "My brave Triton! I have still one faithful follower. Let them go—better alone, than with those who fear to follow us."

He rode forward; the men fell into earnest debate; they had, at bottom, a superstitious faith in Pedrillo's invincibility. The first act of cowardice is as painful to men of daring, as an act of courage to a coward; timid as they proved in a land-service, they could not endure the thought of returning no more to the exciting dangers, and merry revels of their good ship; the reward, the gold glittered as they were relaxing their grasp of it; and finally, they spurred on their horses, overtook Pedrillo, and, stammering out their apologies, they assured him they would 'do or die' in his service. He received their proffers rather as a favour to them, than important to himself; but he

understood his art too well, not to keep their courage up to the sticking point, by fixing their eyes on the success and reward of their enterprise.

They had travelled more than three hours; had passed the road that strikes from the main route to Amboy, and were not very far from Brunswick, when Pedrillo began to manifest great anxiety. Their dangers multiplied at every mile they receded from Amboy. The moon was rising. He looked at his watch. " It is four o'clock; he said, " in two hours we shall have day-light; spur on your horses, my men; our fate must be decided before the morning—ha! stop! Is not that a carriage standing before an inn?" They strained their eyes to define the distant object, and slowly approaching, they all pronounced it to be a carriage. " Were the horses attached to it?" was the next query. They were not.

" By my soul!" said Pedrillo, " I believe we have them!—softly, my men, we'll dismount and reconnoitre—here is a ruined shed, we will leave our horses here. We must approach cautiously—there are lights

glimmering about the tavern—I will precede you a few yards. I can ascertain at a glance if the persons whom I seek are here. If you hear me whistle, join me instantly—obey whatever order I shall give you—be up to your own mark, my good fellows—I ask no more."

Pedrillo slowly proceeded. In his eagerness he had forgotten that his little spaniel who, as usual, followed him, might betray him by the tinkling of his bells, and he took him in his arm, and kept his hand on them.

Many a scene of danger and blood had he encountered without a variation of his pulse —many a peril imminent and desperate, without a shrinking or foreboding—but now his stout heart throbbed like a coward's—he felt that it was the moment of fate to him; almost unconsciously he slackened his pace, and, midway between his companions and the inn, he stopped. The fretted vault of heaven hung over him in its clear and inexpressible beauty. The moon was unobscured. If there be a *religious* light, it is that she casts over the hushed earth. Not a

sound broke the all-pervading stillness. The sleep of winter reigned over nature; and yet to Pedrillo's startled conscience there was in this deep silence a loud accusing voice; on the beautiful arch of Heaven a hand-writing, as it were, against him. "I am a wretch," he murmured, "an outcast—a solitary vagrant on earth, working mischief to the only being I love—and loved myself by none." The little spaniel, as if in intelligent reply to his master's words, reared his head from his bosom, and laid it fondly to his cheek—the tears gushed from Pedrillo's eye, the spontaneous response of nature to the touch of true affection. "*You* love me, Triton—poor fellow! if I perish, one creature of God's earth will cry over the mould that covers me." The dog whimpered. He understood the feeling, if not the words, expressed in the broken tones of his master's voice—"Hush, Triton, hush—we are both turning drivellers—our work waits for us;" and, repressing his gracious feeling, he pressed on to the execution of his diabolical purpose.

As soon as he was near enough to the house accurately to distinguish objects, he

perceived that the inn was a small edifice, which could only supply accomodation to very few persons, and therefore that he had no reason to apprehend the opposition of numbers; and, on approaching nearer, he saw the figures of two females, or rather their shadows, defined on the slight curtains that obscured the window of a small upper apartment, which was lighted by a brillant pine fire. These persons might be, he was sure, after a moment's intense observation, they were—Emilie Layton and Miss Clarence. The room beneath was lighted too; he drew near one of its windows, and then all uncertainty ended, for there sat Marion before a comfortable fire, the relics of a supper on a table behind him, and he lost in a lover's reveries. His face expressed the glowing satisfaction of a man who has just secured his dearest object in life. A little blue silk hood of Emilie's, and a pink silk handkerchief, that Pedrillo had often seen tied around her throat, hung over a chair beside her lover. Marion took the hood in his hand, held it before him, looked at it fondly, turned it round and round, rolled the strings over his finger, laid it down—

took up the pink handkerchief—kissed it—folded it most accurately—kissed it again, and laid it next his heart. Young men will forgive him, and old men too, if they remember the fantastic manifestations of their youthful tenderness—but so did not Pedrillo—he wanted but this to stimulate his jealousy, and all his fearful passions to the overt act.

Our travellers had arrived at the inn, after a rapid and incessant drive, about an hour before. Marion believed they were beyond the least chance of pursuit, and, fearful the ladies would be exhausted by fatigue, he had decided to stop for a few hours' repose. The inn was kept by a widow and her daughters, whose reluctance to be disturbed at so unseasonable an hour was overcome by an extraordinary compensation, and the assurance, in answer to their objection that the only man in the establishment was absent, that the coachman would perform all the services the horses required.

Accordingly, he did so; and after doing justice to a cold spare-rib the maidens set before him, and whetting their curiosity, in

regard to the travellers, to the keenest edge by his oracular answers to their queries, he retired to the only lodging that could be afforded him, the hay-loft over his horses.

The ladies withdrew to their apartment, after first talking over their plan for the next day; the probable hour of their arrival at Philadelphia; and whether, as Marion urged, Emilie should permit him to lead her to the altar there, or, as Emilie wished, and Gertrude counselled, the marriage should be deferred till their arrival at his mother's.

Marion was obliged to content himself with a rocking-chair in the parlor, as the only other unoccupied apartment was a little bed-room, to which there was no access but through the ladies' apartment.

When Gertrude and Emilie were in their own room, they seated themselves to warm their feet, and curl their hair; offices that heroines perform in common with baser metal. Gertrude had her own treasure of sweet recollections and bright hopes, and for a moment she forgot there was any shade over Emilie's destiny. Poor Emilie sat looking intently in the fire, abstracted,

and anxious. "Why so sad?" said Gertrude, kissing her.

Emilie dropped her head on her friend's lap, and burst into tears. "Oh, Gertrude, I have such a load at my heart!"

"But why, now when we are beyond all danger—and you have been so tranquil and cheerful till now?"

"I know it, Gertrude; but when I am with Randolph, the present moment seems all enough and for me—I do not think of any thing absent, or past, or to come."

"And your friend has no such power over you?"

"Forgive me, dearest Gertrude—you are, the very best friend in the world, and you, whose friendship is so much stronger than any one's else, when you come to feel what love is, then you will understand me—I am sure I can't explain it. But now I am away from Randolph, my thoughts turn back to my poor father—to his distracted look—and at the last he was so tender to me! He must have been desperately involved with Pedrillo, or he never would have consented to sacrifice me. And my mother! Only

think, Gertrude, how gay she was! how little she thought of what the morrow might bring to her! Oh, Gertrude, I know—I know that evil and sorrow are before me—— Hark! did you not hear a whistle?"

"Pshaw!—no, Emilie—you can fancy you hear any sound when your imagination is excited."

Emilie did not listen to Gertrude; her head was advanced like a startled fawn's—her hand on Gertrude's arm. She pressed it. "There—again—hush——low tinkling bells like Triton's." She started to her feet——"It is Pedrillo!"

"Gracious God, save us!" screamed Gertrude, and, springing to the door, she turned the key, and secured a momentary protection. The sound of the bells had been immediately succeeded by the bursting open of the entry-door, and a loud, rapid command from Pedrillo to his men, to seize Marion, who had heard the previous sounds, and was advancing to the door.

Three women, from the kitchen, rushed into the entry. Pedrillo presented a pistol, and they fled like scared pigeons. At a

step he mounted the stairs, and while he was standing beating against the door, Gertrude forced Emilie, who was nearly lifeless, into the inner room, and bade her turn the lock, which she had just time to do before Pedrillo burst into the apartment. His eye glanced wildly around. "Where is she?" he exclaimed; and he instantly felt that his question was answered by Gertrude's erect figure standing like a statue, as pale and as fixed, against the door of the inner apartment. Pedrillo was struck by her lofty glance and determined air. He had never coped with heroism in such a shape, and he shrank as he would not have done from an armed enemy. But the homage was momentary. "Suffer me to pass, Miss Clarence," he said, "compel me not to further violence."

"I would prevent you from further violence—have you forgotten every thing gentlemanly, manly, that you dare, like a common ruffian, to force yourself into our apartment?"

"I did not come here to reason or palter with you, Gertrude Clarence. I came here

to right my wrongs—to have revenge for treachery; stand back, I command you, on peril of your life!"

"I will not move one inch, till you promise me"—

"Promise you!" he cried, interrupting her with a scornful shout; "do you think me a child, or fool, to be resisted by a woman!" and, holding her off with one arm, he thrust his shoulder against the door, and burst it open with a single effort. Emilie was on her knees, her hands clasped, and her eyes fixed. He seized her arm. "Traitress! I have you now, and for ever!" Her hands relaxed, her arms fell, and every sign of life vanished. Gertrude received her lifeless form in her arms. "Monster! you have killed her," she shrieked.

Pedrillo laid his hand on her heart. "It beats," he said, "she will recover presently. Holloa there! my men! find the coachman instantly—order him to put to the horses; if he resists, put your pistols to his head—no delay!"

The sound of the contest below with Marion had just ceased. Surprised and un-

armed as he was, he had made a brave resistance. The men, according to Pedrillo's order, had forborne to fire on him. He opposed their weapons with such implements of defence as the apartment supplied; and, though repeatedly wounded and drenched in blood, he had forced his way to the stair-case, when a new uproar broke out. Pedrillo's last command to his men was answered by the discharge of two pistols, and the instant appearance of Roscoe before him.

Pedrillo drew a dirk, and sprang towards him. Roscoe was well-armed, and they met in desperate encounter. But the strife was unequal. What was Roscoe, who had never handled any weapon but the guarded foil, and that in the holiday exercise of the fencing-school, against an adversary practised and accomplished in the use of every mortal weapon, and accustomed to sudden assaults and desperate defences? Roscoe fought, it is true, with the impulse of a good cause—and so have many others, brave and noble, fought and fallen. His eye had met Gertrude's — had met her glance of

tenderness, horror and dread. She still supported Emilie in her arms ; Emilie looking like a victim to be avenged, rather than a living creature to be saved. Pedrillo made repeated thrusts, vigorous and skilful. Roscoe parried them all ; neither gained any perceptible advantage, till by a sudden turn Pedrillo disarmed him. Gertrude's eye fell, and she uttered a cry that pierced Roscoe's soul. Again she looked, and Pedrillo too was disarmed, and they had grappled. Another instant, and Pedrillo was conscious that Roscoe was gaining the ascendancy. "Here, my men !" he cried.

"There are more here !" was the answer.

"Ha !—stab them—shoot them down—spare none !" A death-cry and a heavy fall immediately followed.

"Randolph is killed !" shrieked Gertrude. The name, the words roused Emilie like one awakened from the dead. She opened her eyes, gazed wildly around, clasped her arms around Gertrude's neck, and hid her face on her bosom. Roscoe's eye involuntarily turned towards them. Pedrillo profited by this impulse of treacherous

tenderness, extricated his right arm, and drew a Spanish knife from beneath his vest—another breath, and he would have buried it in Roscoe's bosom,—but his arm was palsied, drops of sweat started on his forehead, the blood in his swollen veins curdled, his crimson face changed to a livid paleness, for at that instant his father —his father, wounded and pressed by one of his men, fell across the threshold of the door. The ruffian stepped back to give force to a blow he was aiming with the muzzle of his pistol, at the old man's head, when Pedrillo shouted—"Hold! stop! on your life do not harm him!"

Roscoe saw the sudden change, and felt that Pedrillo had become as impotent as a sick child in his grasp. He released him. Pedrillo staggered towards his accomplice. The fellow stared at him, as if the curse of heaven were visible on his pallid brow. "Where is your comrade?" demanded Pedrillo.

"Dead!"

"Fly then, to Amboy. Tell our good

fellows that I died no coward death. Tell them I fell by the hand of a brave man." ——He plunged the knife into his own bosom, and fell at his father's feet. The man did not wait to see the issue, but, unopposed, obeyed his master's last command.

The younger Flint was of the rescuing party, and had done his part bravely. When Pedrillo gave the command to shoot down the assailants, one of the ruffians aimed his pistol at the old man. Flint struck the wretch's arm. The pistol went off; but the bullet, instead of reaching its destined aim, passed through his comrade's head. The poor creature in his dying agony extended his arms, clasped Flint and fell with him; Flint under, and nearly strangled in his death-grasp. As soon as he could extricate himself, he flew up stairs.

The work was done there. His father, regardless of his own slight wound, was assisting Roscoe to remove Pedrillo to the bed. There they laid him. His eyes were closed, and he appeared senseless. They tried in vain to staunch his wound. His

little dog jumped on the bed, whimpered, cried most piteously, and alternately looked in his master's face and licked his wound.

The old man reverently clasped his hands. "Oh God," he ejaculated, "have mercy on his soul!—Forgive him, who has had no mercy on himself!" He paused, laid his hand on Pedrillo's brow, already covered with the dews of death. "Oh, my son, my son!" he continued, "would that I had died for thee! Through grace I am ready to meet my Judge; I have an honest account to render; poor fellow, you've a fearful reckoning—robbery and murder, on land, and on sea!—Oh, God have mercy on you!"

"Father of mercies!" exclaimed the younger Flint, whose senses, till now, had been confounded, "this is not Isaac — is it?"

"Even so, Duty. I did not mean you should have known it, but I forgot myself. It is a grievous task to see a son and brother sinking into the grave with such a load of guilt upon him." The old man again clasped his hands, and raised his eyes in

silent prayer. Pedrillo unclosed his eyes, glared wildly around, then fixed them on his father, and murmured faintly, "It is too late!"

At this manifestation of life from his master, the little spaniel became louder and more earnest in his expressions of love and distress. "Poor fellow!—poor Triton!" said Pedrillo. "Will some of you, for the love of Heaven, give me a sharp pen-knife?—there is a chord that I would loosen." Young Flint opened his knife, and gave it to him. "Hold up your head, my poor fellow,"—he continued to Triton. The dog fixed his eye on his master's, and stretched his head towards him, and Pedrillo, with a sudden convulsive effort, drew the knife under his ear, and separated the carotid artery. The animal gasped, extended his tongue to lick his master's hand, and expired.

Exclamations of horror and pity burst forth. Pedrillo replied to them with a ghastly smile, and stroking the dog, "Poor Triton," he said, "you shall never be kicked nor caressed by another master —— Bury us in the same grave, if ye would

do grace to the only prayer of a dying man."

"The only prayer!—oh, my son, my son!" cried the old man, "now—now while you have reason and breath—now implore your Maker's forgiveness!"

"And what good would it do? Is not the decree written against me, 'ye shall be judged according to your deeds?' Can I restore innocence to the tempted?—can I give back the spoils to the spoiled?—can I fill again the veins of the murdered?—Oh no." His voice became choaked and hollow, his features ghastly and distorted. "One word to you, sir," he continued to his father—but father he did not call him, his lips did not attempt that sacred name. "In my pocket-book are papers that will acquaint you with my affairs—you will have countless gold."

"Gold! poor creature! I do not want it— God forbid I should ever touch your ill-gotten gold!"

"Build hospitals and churches, then—they may—hereafter—get my soul out of torment—some good men say so—but now,

when revenge and hate, and passions I have not breath to name, are raging within me"—he laid his father's hand over his fluttering heart—"when hell is here, oh, how shall I escape?"

The convulsions of death spread through his frame. In his fearful struggle, he rose almost erect, and the last involuntary prayer of helpless man burst from lips, which, one moment before, refused to utter it —"Oh God! mercy! mercy!"

CHAPTER X.

"Do not hurry your finishing! Allow us some glimpses of that *terra incognita*—a heroine's establishment."

A YOUNG LADY'S UNPUBLISHED LETTERS.

WE were glad to drop the curtain over a scene that we would fain spare friends and foes—the death-bed of the wicked—the saddest spectacle of human life.

Little remains to be told to those who may have graced us with their company thus far in our narrative, or to those who, disdaining our chase of humble game, have just opened our book to be in at the death.

Roscoe, it may be remembered, was at Mrs. Layton's, and heard Pedrillo's declaration that he would follow the fugitive. He resolved to follow likewise. If Pedrillo

really carried his mad threat into execution, he should be near to afford assistance. In any event he should be near to—Gertrude Clarence. He first went to Flint's lodgings. Flint, as he knew, would be a willing auxiliary, and in case of need a fearless and efficient one. He found our good-natured friend for once in ill-humour. He had relinquished the masquerade, a spectacle that his curiosity burned to witness, for the superior pleasure of passing the evening *tête-à-tête* with Miss Clarence. Even Flint, under the influence of the 'tricksy spirit,' grew a little sentimental and shy of observation. But, lo! when, after having made his toilet with unusual elaborateness, he went to Mrs. Layton's, he was told Miss Clarence was not at home. 'The course of true love never did run smooth,' thought Flint, as he retraced his walk sulkily to his lodging, and there he sat down to listen, with an indifference quite foreign to his lively spirit, to his father's tales of elder times. These were suddenly broken off by Roscoe's entrance.

Roscoe briefly explained his errand. Flint

was all alive to the enterprise. "How fortunate you came for *me*," he whispered to Roscoe; "don't mention it—it is not proper to be told yet—I am as good as engaged to Miss Clarence."

Roscoe started; the shock was momentary, he smiled at his own credulity, and said mentally, 'My self-complacent, sanguine friend! as good as engaged—far better, *not* engaged.'

As they were departing Roscoe, perceived that the elder Flint had armed himself with a bludgeon, and intended joining them. Roscoe remonstrated. The old man took him aside, and communicated his secret reasons. Roscoe feared they might be retarded by this addition to their party, but he could not refuse his assent. His fears however were groundless. The old man's energetic habits and excited feeling enabled him, though not so well mounted, to keep up with his companions; and such was the rapidity of their pursuit, that when Pedrillo dismounted, they were not a mile behind him.

Roscoe, as may be imagined, had not remained idly gazing on the dying man, while Gertrude needed his assistance. She and Emilie were conveyed to another apartment, where the women attended them with such restoratives as the house afforded; but these were not probably so efficient as the assurance — for Emilie had recovered her consciousness—that their lovers were near them and in safety.

Marion's wounds, though they witnessed that he had proved himself a true knight in the contest, were not alarming; and measures were immediately taken for the return of all parties to town, and for avoiding, as far as possible, publicity of the painful circumstances of the past night.

A coroner's inquest was summoned to sit on the body of Pedrillo. Previously to presenting the facts of the case, Roscoe inquired of the elder Flint if he meant to persevere in the resolution he had declared to his dying son. He replied that he did. "Had you not better," suggested Roscoe, "defer your ultimate decision; it will be perfectly easy

to establish your claim to the property—after more deliberation your feelings may change?"

"For that very reason, my young friend, I choose to make my decision now. I have made it a rule, and it has carried me safe so far, to obey the first decision of conscience; you may reason and tamper with it, and soften it down; but take it at its word, its first bold honest word. It makes me shudder to think even of handling the poor creature's money; and I do not want it"—the old man shook his head emphatically, "I do not want it, Mr. Roscoe; my children are all good livers, and they are not brought up, excepting Duty, to be gentlemen; and the money would spoil them for any thing else. And for myself, what *could* money do for me, but may be make me *uneasy?* My journey of life is almost ended—I have more than enough to pay my expenses by the way; and would a store of wealth render me any more welcome at my *Father's mansion?* though it might make me far less willing to get there. My mind, is fixed, Mr. Roscoe."

"I honour your decision, sir, and the

reasons for it; but why not, as the unhappy man suggested, apply his property to charitable uses?"

"No, no, Mr. Roscoe, no; I have thought of that, but I should be ashamed to offer to the Lord what I won't soil my own hands with. What, think you, is the *spiritual* meaning of the command, that the sacrifice should be 'without spot or blemish, or any such thing?' Can the fruits of such misdoings, as caused the poor fellow's last agony, be an acceptable gift for the altar of God?

"We condemn the Romanists, because some among them fancy their sins may be redeemed—their souls bought out of purgatory by gifts to the church and the poor. But how much better are we, who encourage the living sinner by sanctifying the dead? There is a deep mischief in this, Mr. Roscoe, and often have I pondered on it. The rich man who fares sumptuously every day, and shuts his eye upon his starving brother; the miser that hoards his treasure even from himself; the Heaven-forsaken wretch who murders and spoils; all have their hours of

misgiving, their lonely night-watches, when thoughts of death and the judgment to come harrow their souls. And how do they still the clamours of conscience? Is it not by the promise that at some *future* time—at the worst, when they come to die, they will give all to their Maker? But let their gift perish with them, and let the offering to the Lord be the fruits of an honest and obedient life. This He requires, and these are a sweet incense to Him."

Roscoe heartily expressed his admiration of the old man's sentiments. A blush that would have graced sixteen tinged the latter's cheek as he replied, "You speak from your heart, Mr. Roscoe, I believe, but I am not clear that I deserve all you say. I, like other men, act from my feelings, and afterwards think of the reasons to bear me out. I have my own pride, and it would break my heart to own that self-murderer was my son. He was a boy when he left my roof, and he is forgotten. I am proud of my name. He was the only dishonest man, as far as I can learn, that ever answered to it."

"One more suggestion, sir," said Roscoe,

"and I have done. Do your son's sentiments accord with yours?"

"Duty's? Perfectly — perfectly. An honest, independent, manly boy, is Duty. As is his name, so is he."

Their sturdy integrity, their good sense, and nice perception of true honour, secured to both father and son Roscoe's friendship for life.

So many of the facts as were essential to their verdict were disclosed to the jury of inquest, and no more. Pedrillo's last request was respected. Triton was buried at his feet. The elder Flint remained with the body till the funeral rites were performed. Not one of the few assistants who officiated suspected the bitter feelings with which the old man bent over the grave that enclosed his first-born.

In consequence of Marion's wounds, the party was compelled to return to town by slow stages, and did not arrive till the third day after they had left it. They found Mrs. Layton's house in the greatest confusion. Layton had been brought home in a state of insensibility. When he recovered his con-

sciousness, he dismissed his attendants, and locked his door. The servants had made repeated applications for admission, but no answer had been returned, and not a sound had proceeded from the apartment.

Mrs. Layton had shut herself in her own room; had denied access to all but her own maid, and had forbidden the servants to apply to her for orders on any subject.

In this state of affairs our fugitives were received. Roscoe had, at once, a foreboding of the real condition of Layton, which he intimated to Gertrude in a whisper, and then ordered one of the servants to attend him to his master's apartment. After knocking and calling in vain, they forced open the door. Layton's body was lying on the floor; his spirit had gone to render up its dread account. An empty phial lay beside him, and a pencil and piece of paper, on which he had scrawled, 'Forgive me, my children—God have mercy on my soul!'

On examination, his affairs were found in the most disarranged condition. About half the certificates of stock, which Miss Clarence had transferred to him, were in his

pocket-book, within an envelope, on which was written, 'The enclosed to be delivered to Miss Clarence, to whom, though bearing my name, they really belong.' Miss Clarence, on being applied to, declined to assume any farther control of the property than to vest it in the hands of trustees, for Mr. Layton's children, with a stipulation that a portion of the income should be at the disposition of his widow.

The grave interposed its shield at a fortunate moment for poor Layton. His gaming associates were not without a certain sense of honor which bound them to preserve inviolate the secrets of their club; and Pedrillo's disclosure was never made public. Thus Emilie was sheltered from a knowledge of her father's disgrace; and, though she sorrowed long and bitterly, she had every solace that love and friendship could supply.

Our friend Duty was gradually awakened to the real state of his matrimonial prospects. He had a genuine admiration for Miss Clarence, and the extinction of his o'er-grasping hopes was a serious shock to

him. For the first time in his life, his sparkling eyes were dimmed with sentimental tears; but he was not of a temper to break his heart in a love affair, and gradually such little consolations insinuated themselves into his mind, as that 'Miss Clarence was probably in love with Gerald Roscoe before she ever saw him'—'That as Fate had so ordered it, that he could not himself obtain her, he would rather see her the wife of Roscoe than of any other man on earth'—'That next in value to her love was her cordial friendship'—and finally, 'That if, as he verily believed, Gertrude Clarence had no equal, why should he not set about looking out for a *second best*?'

We do not know that we can conclude more satisfactorily, than by two authentic letters from the principal personages of our narrative; the one written during the summer following the last events we have recorded, and the other some months later, when time had matured and somewhat mellowed the feelings we have described. Both were addressed to Miss Marion—the first from Emilie.

"*To Miss Marion.*

"Clarenceville, June 18—.

"My dear *sister*—Last Tuesday evening "invested me with the right to address you "by this endearing name; but no rights "can add to the gratitude and affection your "Emilie has long borne to you.

"We were to have had a private wedding "—Gertrude desired it, and I, particularly "on account of my mourning; but Mr. "Clarence said there should be no sign of "sadness on so joyful an occasion as the "union of four loving and true hearts, and "that the pleasure of a wedding-festival to "Gertrude's country friends, was worth "some sacrifice on our parts; and so we "consented — could we help it? — to his "wishes. The doors were thrown open, and "all Clarenceville was present, old and young, "rich and poor, to see their friend, bene-"factress, and queen, united to a man whom "they confess to be worthy of her.

"Before we went into the drawing-room, "we were all, (by all I mean Gertrude, and "Mr. Roscoe, and his mother—a celestial

"woman, Augusta—and Randolph, and my-
"self,) we were all in the library. Mr.
"Clarence came in with his hands full of
"papers. 'You must forgive me, my young
"friends,' he said, 'for remembering, at
"this interesting moment, your worldly
"concerns—you, I presume, have entirely
"forgotten them. You and I, my dear
"Gerald, in pecuniary affairs, are hence-
"forth equal partners.' He put into Mr.
"Roscoe's hands papers which transferred
"to him the half of his fortune. Roscoe
"looked a little disconcerted; but he soon
"recovered himself, and replied, in his own
"frank and pleasant manner, 'This gift,'
"sir,' and he kissed Gertrude's hand, 'has
"exhausted my gratitude; I cannot even
"make a return of words for an inferior
"proof of your generosity.'

"'Generosity! my dear fellow,' said
"Mr. Clarence, 'you know not with what
"joy I devolve half the burden and respon-
"sibility of my wealth upon you—with
"what gratitude I regard the benign Pro-
"vidence that has granted the dearest wish

"of my heart, in giving me a friend on
"whom I may repose this trust.'

"'As a trust then, Sir,' replied Roscoe,
"I receive it, and, by the grace of God,
"I will never dishonor your confidence."

"Randolph afterwards said, that this was
"a manner of giving and receiving, becom-
"ing rational and elevated beings, and he
"could not but contrast it with the usual
"quarrels about settlements — with the
"jealousy and parsimony towards sons-in-
"law on the one side, and, on the other,
"the anxious reckoning of the father's
"wealth, and calculation of the chances of
"his life. For my part, dear Augusta, I
"did not think; I only *felt*, and had I not
"reason? for at the next moment Mr.
"Clarence turned to me—'And you, my
"little Emilie, my other child,' he said,
"'I am to give you away, too—it would be
"a shame to give you empty-handed, though
"Marion looks as if he felt now, and would
"for ever, that

'Kindness, sweet kindness, in the fond, spark-
ling e'e,
'Has lustre outshining the diamond to me.'

" 'Does not the verse run so? my memory
" may halt, but not my love, for,' he added,
" giving me a check for twenty thousand
" dollars, 'you, Emilie, like the youngest
" daughters in fairy tales, have the best
" portion; for such, in my opinion, is a mere
" competence.'

" I did not say one word. I threw my
" arms around his neck, and he kissed off
" my tears. I thought of my poor father
" —God forgive me for comparing him with
" Mr. Clarence at that moment.

" My letter would exceed all bounds, if
" I were to give you half the particulars of
" the evening. The drawing-rooms were
" hung with wreaths of flowers. The
" gardener had not spared his finest plants;
" the lawn was illuminated with colored
" lamps, and a band of music was placed on
" the piazza. The children were merry and
" noisy, but the rest of the company were
" thoughtful—they felt that the wedding was
" a prelude to parting with Gertrude; and
" she is so beloved and honored here!
" 'Not a creature ever crossed your path,'
" said one of her old friends to her, 'but

" was the better or the happier for it.' Do
" you not believe, my dear sister, that the
" duties she has so well performed have
" risen as incense to Heaven, to descend
" again in blessings on her new home?

" Randolph, saucy fellow! has just bent
" over my shoulder, and read my letter.
" 'Not one word of your husband!' he says.
" Oh Augusta! men do not seem to know
" that we are not forward to express what
" we feel most deeply. I am no great wri-
" ter, to be sure; but if I were equal to you,
" or Gertrude, I could not find language to
" express what I feel for my husband.
" 'There, Mr. Randolph, read that, if you
" like.'

" You do not yet know how much Ger-
" trude has done for us. Poor mamma was
" too much depressed to make any exertion.
" Gertrude wished her to take a small house,
" and devote herself to the education of my
" sisters. You know mamma is very accom-
" plished; but she said she had a natural
" antipathy to instruction—her mind would
" prey upon itself, &c. &c. So it was de-
" cided that my brothers should be sent to

"a boarding-school in Massachusetts, and
"my sisters should live with me. Ran-
"dolph and I both begged mamma to make
"our house hers, but she preferred a
"boarding-house, and she has a room at
"Madame Pignot's, beautifully arranged.
"I was glad to see she could interest her-
"self in this.

"My tenderest love to your and *my*
"mother. Tell her, that but for some sad,
"sad recollections, I should be perfectly
"happy. But was not my morning fear-
"fully clouded? God grant that my future
"life may prove that the gracious influences
"of Heaven were distilled from that dark
"cloud; and then, my dear sister, I shall
"not be unworthy of my happy destiny,
"and of that illustrious name, which I *now*
"for the first time sign.

"Yours truly,

"EMILIE MARION."

" *To Miss Marion.*

" New York, Feb. 18—.

" My dear friend—You conclude your last " letter with a request that I will write you " a 'womanish epistle, full of feminine de- " tails; such as, what house I live in, how " it is furnished and garnished, whom I visit, " &c., &c.' I have quoted the passage, that " if I answer it *à la lettre*, you may remember " that you called forth my egotism. Mr. " Roscoe was so fortunate as to be able to " repurchase his father's house, a fine old " family mansion, not far from our beautiful " battery, and commanding a view of our " animated bay, which, if equalled, we the " untravelled believe is not surpassed, by " the happiest combinations of land and " water on this fair earth. The house is " somewhat old-fashioned, but we have " given it the most modern and convenient " arrangement of which it was susceptible, " without an entire and therefore, as we " think, sacrilegious alteration.

" Is it altogether our misfortune, or in " some degree our fault, that we have so

"few transmitted homes? As far as this "is the result of the equal partition of "estates in our country, and in our city, "particularly, of the influx of population "and the fluctuation of fortune, we cannot "help it; but, certainly as far as it is our "own fault, we should lament and correct "it. Have we not a passion for change and "novelty? Whence comes, in this city, "our most pernicious and prevailing custom "of an annual remove? the terrors of 'May "day,' when the household gods seem "changed into demons, and 'domestic hap-"piness' to be no longer, as the poet makes "it, exempt from the general wreck of "Adam's fall? You are a phrenologist, "my dear Augusta—is the bump of locality "found on the American skull?

"I have known a father's house aban-"doned, because the apartments could not "be made to communicate by folding-doors! "or perhaps the ceilings were a foot too "low! those ceilings that have echoed the "merry shout of childhood, the glad wel-"come, the farewell blessing, and the loud, "home, heartfelt laugh. Our home should

" be loved as the ancient Jew loved Jerusa-
" lem—as he loved his temple—the 'holy
" and the beautiful house' he so tenderly
" lamented. It is the temple of the domestic
" affections; the altar on which the freest
" and most beautiful gifts are laid; the spot
" that, with all its accumulating associa-
" tions, its holy spell of sacred recollections
" and sweet hopes, has no parallel on earth.
" My dear Augusta, I forbear—I perceive I
" am running into sentiment on this sub-
" ject, and I have already said quite enough
" to convince you that I am satisfied with
" my location.

" Our furniture is the next topic on your
" list. I shall give you the principle on
" which we have proceeded; this is not
" quite so *womanish* as details; but those I
" defer for your own observation. We have
" not emulated the glittering and sumptuous
" drawing-rooms of our wealthy citizens, and
" we have carefully avoided (I have often
" seen this disparity) a bare and sordid
" aspect in the upper apartments. All our
" sacrifices have been to the household wor-
" thies who preside over hospitality; our

"lodging-rooms have their contiguous "dressing-rooms, are warmed by heated "air, and each story has its bathing-room.

"Our library is a fine apartment on the "second floor. The rebuking genius of "economy has not presumed to pass its "threshold. It is richly furnished with the "classics in English, French, German, "Italian, and Spanish, and all of the best "editions: no diamond type to wear out "young eyes, and vex old ones. The books "are accompanied by their appropriate auxi-"liaries, globes, maps, atlases, prints, &c. "The room is decorated with a few busts of "those who are regarded in all enlightened "countries as the noblest personifications "of genius, Dante, Cervantes, Fenelon, "Shakspeare, and Bacon. One fine por-"trait is placed in the most conspicuous "position over the fire-place—the *hearth-"stone*—as emblematic of the right of the "original to preside over the charities and "felicities of home, as well as to be the "ruling spirit of an apartment consecrated "to the Muses. Whose is it? do you ask,

"Augusta? Whose should it be but his, "who is *par excellence* the genius of the "age, the benefactor of our homes?—who "by his enchantments has fraught more "hours with pure and profitable pleasure "than any writer of any age: — who has "lighted up the dim eye of sickness—who "has rejuvenated the old, awakened in "them the sleeping sympathies and affec-"tions of their youth, and filled

'Each blank in faithless memory's void;'

"who has unfolded the ample page of "knowledge to the boy, and made his pulse "throb with generous purpose and high as-"piration—who has kindled in all our hearts "a loyal, a more than loyal, a filial love; "so that we all

'Do stand on tiptoe when his name is named.'

"Praise and glory on his head! Long—long "may it tower above his fellows, and at last, "when reverently laid beside the dust of "his fathers, be honored and wept.

"How shall I descend, dear Augusta,

"from such a theme to the topics of my "letter—curtains and carpets, plate and "china? I cannot: take it for granted, "that the whole concern is in tolerable taste "—that we, in our embellishments, have se-"lected those that develope and elevate the "taste, and are its enduring gratifications—"that we have *par exemple* some fine sta-"tuary, and beautifully sculptured Italian "vases. Gerald has applied to Leslie for a "pair of his exquisite cabinet pictures. I "trust the suspicion that he is reluctant to "send his productions to this country is "unfounded; for, though we are not yet "rich enough to afford patronage to the fine "arts, we are not without the capacity to "admire and be improved by them; and it "seems to me, that an artist should be proud "to lay the fruits of his genius upon the "altar of that country where it was first "developed, even though the sacrifice should "be unappreciated.

"Poor Seton! his Trenton-picture hangs "in my own room, an affecting memorial of "his genius and misfortunes,—an altar-"piece, that calls forth sacred recollections

" and hopes. To Seton I owe all the taste
" I may have in the fine arts, and probably
" much of the lively interest I feel in our
" native artists—an interest of which I have
" not been sparing in my demonstrations,
" for I have family portraits by our masters
" in that department, Copley, Stuart, Sully,
" &c., a variety of illustrations of our own
" scenery by our rising artists, and a beau-
" tiful picture of our sweet Emilie, by Ing-
" ham, an American by adoption:—the pain-
" ter has grouped her younger sisters grace-
" fully about her, and, with his usual eminent
" success, has transfused the soft and living
" tints of youth and beauty to the canvass,
" has shown his unequalled skill in drapery,
" and imparted such sparkling and living
" lustre to the eyes, that you could almost
" believe he had stolen Prometheus' fire, and
" that the spirit beamed from its 'throne of
" light.'"

" Dear Emilie! she deserves to personify
" the virtues of an elder sister. With beauty
" that is never seen without being admired,
" she avoids observation, and seems to have
" no ambition beyond that of performing

" well and quietly her domestic duties—a
" woman's gentle and best ambition, is it
" not?. Your brother certainly thinks so,
" for he still regards her (and will always, I
" doubt not) with the intense devotion of
" one, who, through much tribulation, has
" obtained an unparalleled treasure.

" Poor Mrs. Layton is a prey to *ennui.*
" The death of her husband, and its fright-
" ful circumstances, for a while appalled her.
" She went regularly to church, and fre-
" quented evening lectures, and seemed
" to be undergoing a transformation, not
" uncommon, from a woman of the world to
" a devotee; but it proved a fever heat, not
" the gentle salutary warmth of religion, and
" it has passed away. Our highest moralists
" tell us never to despair of humanity, and we
" should not; but when were all-engross-
" ing selfishness, frivolous habits, and
" thirst for admiration and coquetry, in-
" dulged for thirty years—when were they
" cured but by the hard necessities of age?
" Thank Heaven, our country is not a thea-
" tre for such women as Mrs. Layton. She

"is isolated and fettered by our tame do-
"mestic habits—as much out of place as a
"jewel on a yeoman's finger, or a syllabub
"on his table. She might have run a more
"brilliant career in the more polished, and
"more corrupt circles of Europe, but *to be*
"*suspected* is as fatal to an American wo-
"man as it could have been to Cæsar's
"wife.

"I am eagerly listening for the voice of
"spring, for you know, at the first gushing
"of the waters, at the very first passage of
"the steam-boats, you are to be with us.
"I expect to surprise you, who have re-
"ceived your impressions of New York so-
"ciety from my distorted views of it while
"I was at Mrs. Layton's, with the delight-
"ful circles we assemble at our own house.
"In a city of the multifarious character of
"New York, it is a difficult art to select
"our society—a most critical navigation to
"steer clear of offending acquaintance you
"do not want, and to secure without for-
"wardness those you covet. However, the
"good to be obtained, fine society, the very

"first of social, intellectual luxuries, is
"worth effort. Fortunately for us, our
"position gives us the privilege of selection,
"and we make it without reference to any
"thing but the character of our guests.
"Those meet under our roof, who never
"meet elsewhere—persons of the first
"fashion, professional laborious toilers, and
"the secluded men of genius.

"Julia Mayo is our *prima donna;* but
"among all my female friends, and there
"are several talented in divers ways, not
"one is more fascinating to me, than An-
"gélique Abeille, a little French girl, whose
"history I will some day tell you. She
"plays and sings exquisitely, and is the
"charm of our musical parties.

"Do not imagine, my dear friend, that I
"have become a devotee to society, even
"though it be of the most elevated and at-
"tractive character. No, I am too rich in
"my own private blessings—in the cha-
"racter and affections of my husband—in
"the society of Gerald's admirable mother,
"and that of my dear father, to be in any

" danger of forgetting that the family circle " is the inner temple, where our highest " gifts and best affections must be conse- " crated, and will be rewarded. And in " all my prosperity, it is my earnest desire " and purpose, to preserve my mind from " undue elation—to perform the serious " unostentatious duties of a Christian wo- " man—to walk humbly with my God.

" My letter has ended seriously, my dear " Augusta; but how could I cast my eye " over the whole of my prosperous condi- " tion, without serious thoughts of the res- " ponsibilities, the uncertainties, and the " brevity of life?—without an emotion of " deep gratitude to Him, who has given me " wealth, and saved me from its perils, and " who has enriched me with that far better, " and best of all earthly blessings, the affec- " tions of one, on whose truth and virtue I " may repose without fear of any change " —because I know *they* will not change.

" Am I boasting to my single friend? no " —who shall dare to boast, to one who " gives such grace and loveliness to single-

" ness?—whose virtues do not need the
" highest stimulants and rewards; for that
" the *highest* belongs to *married* life, you
" must forgive me for believing, since I am
" (and always affectionately your friend,)

" GERTRUDE *ROSCOE*."

THE END.

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